

RUSSIAN POETRY AND CRITICISM
in the Twentieth Century
Studies and Texts

EDITED BY
JAN PAUL HIRSHIG

RUSSIAN POETRY AND CRITICISM IN PARIS

Russian Emigré Literature
in the Twentieth Century
Studies and Texts

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JAN PAUL HINRICHS

VOLUME 1

RUSSIAN POETRY AND CRITICISM IN PARIS FROM 1920 TO 1940

BY

ALEKSEY GIBSON

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Russian Language Literature
IN PARIS
FROM 1920 TO 1940
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BY

ALEXSEY GORON
EDITED BY

JAN PAUL HINRICHS

VOLUME I



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I also owe special thanks to my parents Dr and Mrs C.D. Gibson, without whose support this work would not have been possible.

Many of the policies, which are naturally beyond the scope of this work, the effect of liberalization in matters cultural has had, since around 1986, is a limited "rehabilitation" of Russian émigré writers and their work. The process is still in its infancy and, to a certain extent, tells us more about the dynamics within Soviet society than about the writers in question. While one can only welcome the publication in the Soviet Union of long suppressed material, and wishes devoted to it, it must be remembered that what often passes for a novelty or revelation in the Soviet Union, may already be common knowledge in the West.

Thus, for example, the publication of Chodasevich's *Diary* in the Soviet journal *Novy* can hardly be regarded as a revelation from the point of view of Western scholars, as they have long had at least access to the original Paris edition of 1931 (not to mention the revised Paris edition of 1966). That they have not taken much interest in the material lying at their feet is another matter. Although I must admit, I may naturally annoy or challenge some of my findings or conclusions, I do not doubt that the guiding principles of my work will be understood, namely: respect for the essential importance of primary sources and the émigré writers' own perceptions of themselves.

Despite its title, this book does not pretend to be a comprehensive analysis of the poetry and poetics of Russian émigré writers. It is

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FOREWORD

This book was first conceived and written as a post-graduate thesis for the University of London, where it was submitted and examined in 1987/1988. Considering the present revival of interest in Russian émigré literature, both in the West and in the Soviet Union, I hope that this work will find a wider and more varied audience than its original one.

As I mention in my introduction, the study of the literature of the Russian emigration, of whatever period, is still fraught with many difficulties, some more apparent than others. Their solution may in part depend on the success of those changes which are currently underway in the Soviet Union. Even within the time it took to research and write my thesis (1983-1986), the "Gorbačev era" arose and began to flourish on the seemingly barren soil left by his immediate, and more remote predecessors. Aside from the larger implications of Michail Gorbačev's policies, which are naturally beyond the scope of this work, the effect of liberalization in matters cultural has led, since around 1986, to a limited "rehabilitation" of Russian émigré writers and their work. This process is still in its infancy and, to a certain extent, tells us more about the dynamics within Soviet society than about the writers in question. While one can only welcome the publication in the Soviet Union of long suppressed material, and studies devoted to it, it must be remembered that what often passes for a novelty or revelation in the Soviet Union, may already be common knowledge in the West.

Thus, for example, the publication of Chodasevič's *Deržavin* in the Soviet journal *Neva* can hardly be regarded as a sensation from the point of view of Western scholars, as they have long had at their disposal the original Paris edition of 1931 (not to mention the second Paris edition of 1986). That they have not taken much interest in the material lying at their feet is another matter. Although further research may naturally amend or challenge some of my findings or conclusions, I do not doubt that the guiding principles of my work will be confirmed, namely: respect for the essential importance of primary sources and the émigré writers' own perceptions of themselves.

Despite its title, this book does not pretend to be a comprehensive analysis of the poetry and poetics of Russian Paris between 1920 and

1940. Those who are familiar with the period will miss discussion of the work of, among others, Aleksandr Ginger, Anna Prismanova, Lidija Červinskaja, Nikolaj Ocu, Dovid Knut, Antonin Ladinskij, Boris Božnev and Vadim Andreev, along with the more notable omissions of Georgij Ivanov and Marina Cvetaeva. However, as I wanted to concentrate as much as possible on the relationship between the older and younger generations of writers which, characterised the pre-war scene and which disappeared with the deaths of Chodasevič and the Merežkovskijs (just before and during the war), it became clear that I would have to exclude those poets, such as the above, who continued to write well into the 1950's under completely different circumstances. This is not to ignore the influence the surviving generation of poets might have had on their contemporaries during their youth: in the case of Georgij Ivanov (or even Marina Cvetaeva), it would be particularly rewarding to search for echoes of their poetry in the work of those who were reading them. Such influences are notoriously difficult to establish, even if easy to detect, and I believe that at the stage at which I began my investigation it was far more important to read the work of the Paris poets in the light of their own criticism than through comparisons of poetic texts.

One final word of explanation: considering the difficulty of finding much of the material examined in this study, and the state of deterioration from which much of it suffers (newspapers in particular), I have decided to include rather lengthy quotations at times. As there is still no danger of over-familiarity with these texts I thought it better to over-than to under-quote.

Stanford, California, December 1988

Aleksey Gibson

May 1990

INTRODUCTION

The present work began life in 1983 as a proposal to re-examine the work of the Russian émigré poet Boris Poplavskij (1903-1935) in the light of unpublished material held in various archives and in relation to Poplavskij's interest in French Surrealist literature. A preliminary investigation of his life and works convinced me, however, that not only was Poplavskij incomprehensible as a poet without reference to the wider context of Paris émigré literature in the period from 1920 to 1940, but that this context itself was worthy of serious attention as a self-contained and neglected period of Russian literary history. These two considerations led me to abandon both the idea of research into manuscripts, as well as a detailed study of the influence of Surrealism, in favour of approaching Poplavskij through his own literary criticism and that of his fellow émigré writers and contemporaries, and of comparing his work with that of another Paris poet of the time, Anatolij Štejger (1907-1944), whose poems seemed of equal stature and interest. In order to gain the best understanding of their work in its original setting, and to provide an overall view of what came to be called the "Paris School" of émigré literature, I have made extensive use of the criticism written by the doyens of this school, Zinaida Gippius, Vladislav Chodasevič and Georgij Adamovič, as well as that by Poplavskij and another member of the younger generation of poets, Jurij Mandel'stam (1908-1943).

In many ways the history of the Paris School and its particular aesthetic, known as the "Paris Note", is the history of the relations between these two generations in exile, the elder (Gippius, Chodasevič, Adamovič) having assumed the task of preserving the culture of the Russian Silver Age and of forming the next generation; the younger having to come to terms with this expectation and their own experience as émigrés. With Gippius, Chodasevič and Adamovič this interest in educating the young through literary criticism tends to replace almost completely the writing of poetry. In the case of the young, as seen here in the work of Poplavskij and Mandel'stam, criticism could also become as important as poetry, for it provided a means of expressing ideas about literature and culture which were often in reaction to what their elders had put forward.

In writing on the poetry I have tried to show how the development of the "Paris Note" was a natural consequence of the cultural situation into which the émigrés were thrown. On the one hand they had brought with them from Russia, and in particular from St. Petersburg, the rarified atmosphere and demanding standards of late Symbolism and Acmeism, and on the other the painful aftereffects which followed the collapse of the ancien régime and the Provisional Government. Between the extremes of the Silver Age's refinement and the brutal lessons of the Revolution, Civil War and exile they had to create a new poetic which betrayed neither their artistic sense nor the reality of their present circumstances. Considering the elusiveness of lyric poetry from all methods of analysis I cannot pretend that my use of contemporary criticism or my search for the characteristics of the "Paris Note" in the work of either Poplavskij or Štejger does these poets complete justice. At least, however, I have been able to offer a framework for reading their poems and to show the extent to which they were conscious of the problems at hand.

Before outlining the structure of this work, I think it necessary to make a few remarks in advance about the general difficulties of studying émigré literature and the way they have shaped my work and my interest in the Paris School. Throughout my research I have been struck not so much by the lack of work on émigré literature and its history, but by an inclination to accept rather complacently what has already been said and to avoid probing for deeper motives and questions. Often treated as a minor branch of twentieth century Russian literature, many specialists are content to leave émigré literature untouched ostensibly because it did not produce "great" authors or works. The shallowness of this reasoning is revealed by the fact that when an undeniably great author is found, such as Nabokov or Cvetaeva, a legend is soon created that they were the exceptions who were "persecuted" by a hostile émigré press. As Simon Karlinsky has pointed out in his foreword to the anthology *The Bitter Air of Exile: Russian Writers in the West 1922-1972* there also persists another form of "self-censorship" about this literature which inhibits further enquiry. As he explains, this is either because émigré literature is assumed not to have anything of interest to say to readers outside émigré circles, or else because of an attitude established in the West some fifty years ago:

By the nineteen thirties, the Western intellectual community, which had no objection to the numerous successful Russian painters, composers, and dancers who were active in the West, came to regard the existence of an exiled Russian literature in its midst with a mixture of hostility and studied indifference. It was during that decade of Stalinist purges and proliferating forced labor camps that large numbers of American, British and French intellectuals (including such men as George Bernard Shaw, Theodore Dreiser, André Gide, and Thomas Mann) came to regard the U.S.S.R. as the finest example of a free and just social organization that humanity had so far been able to devise. A Russian writer who preferred to live abroad rather than contribute to the glorious experiment that was unfolding in his native country was automatically seen as a reactionary exploiter from the past and an obstacle to human progress in the present.¹

This political perspective poses several problems for the student. Never certain whether he is facing a sceptical audience, he might still feel he is under the burden of proving either that an émigré writer is a neglected genius, or that the political and cultural positions of émigré writers were always justified.

If it is difficult to work around the prejudices of Western readers then it can be just as frustrating working with émigré attitudes. Aside from the natural processes of assimilation and attrition which attend the original authors and readers of a literature in exile, the critical and historical study of this literature has suffered from the careless *arrivisme* of a second generation now established in the West, and from misunderstanding by subsequent waves of émigrés. These considerations have not only complicated the methods by which one might approach émigré literature, but they have also caused considerable delays in the reception of this literature in Russia, for even if, "All work by living émigré writers is automatically unpublishable and often unmentionable in the Soviet Union"², there is certainly a demand for it as various documents testify.³

Fortunately for the literary historian and critic the Paris School offers solutions to most of the dilemmas raised by the study of émigré literature. In the first place, although the German occupation of Paris did lead to the destruction and disappearance of many Russian collections, most notably that of the Turgenev library⁴, we still have at our disposal most of the journals and newspapers of the time, which is sadly not the case with archives of the other centres of the emigration, such as Berlin and Prague, where Soviet occupation has prevented access to material where it might still exist. As a consequence of its good state of preservation, the literature of Paris has become the best documented in

terms of catalogues and bibliographies. Finally, it appears by most accounts that Paris was the most selfconsciously "émigré" of all the centres of the emigration, which aside from giving an underlying unity to the work produced there, also helps define what a deliberately émigré culture can mean as a whole.

Part One of this work consists of a chronological survey of secondary literature about the 1920-1940 period, including memoirs, biographies and critical studies written from the occupation of Paris to the present day. The aim of this part is to show that, although interest in the Paris School has not been lacking, there has failed to develop among specialists a consensus about the character and significance of the school and of émigré literature in general. From this survey should emerge some of the reasons for this lack of agreement and an understanding of the problems faced by émigré writers after the war when attempting to record their own history. This literature also reflects changes in attitudes among émigrés and non-émigrés to Soviet claims of hegemony over Russian culture and many of the trends and tensions in modern literary criticism.

In part Two I have returned to the criticism of the twenties and thirties where one can find all the essential elements of an émigré culture: a desire for self-justification and an effort to organise and consolidate the creative energies at hand. Although many sources written after the war maintain that Adamovič was the leading critic of the earlier period, I have preferred to concentrate on Chodasevič and Gippius, not only to balance the argument, but also because I consider their work to be far more thought-provoking and serious. Most of Adamovič's position I have included in my chapter on Poplavskij and his contributions to the journal *Čisla*. This part ends with a description of the final years of the thirties when, despite the imminent threat of war, the émigrés continued to think and write effectively on the current cultural and political crises. In this part I have tried to let the original material speak as much as possible for itself, as most of it has not received proper scholarly attention.

In part Three I have related the poetry of Poplavskij and Štejger to the findings of parts One and Two. While this might appear as a constraint on the reading of their work, I consider the use of contemporary criticism to be one of the more successful ways of illuminating not only the poems themselves, but also the background to them and the intentions of the poets. From this combination of critical and poetical work I hope that a fairly succinct picture of the Paris School and the Paris Note should emerge.

PART ONE

CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY OF POST-WAR LITERATURE

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

As stated in the introduction, this survey of secondary literature concerning the Paris School is not meant to exhaust all the views on the subject, but rather to chart the development of the different approaches taken to the pre-war period, with a critique of their strengths and weaknesses. It begins with Zinaida Gippius' plan for an "Istorija russkoj èmigrantskoj intelligencii", written sometime in 1939, and ends with an exchange of letters between the late Jurij Ivask and Professor Èfim Ètkind which appeared in the émigré newspaper *Russkaja mysl'* in December 1985 and January 1986. The intervening years have been divided into the following phases: 1939 to 1942, 1950 to 1959, and 1969 to 1986, which correspond to the various revivals of interest in the Paris School and émigré literature in general. Before discussing the interpretative literature it is necessary to mention the great importance of the bibliographical work which has been carried out in recent years. In particular, Ludmilla Foster's *Bibliografija russkoj zarubežnoj literatury: 1918-1968* (1970) and Tatiana Ossorguine-Bakounine's *L'émigration russe en Europe: Catalogue collectif des périodiques en langue russe: 1855-1940* (1976) have made the present study possible. Without the high standard of such works, which was set by Gleb Struve in his *Russkaja literatura v izgnanii* (1956), the investigation of émigré literature could never have become established as a serious discipline within the confines of Russian literary scholarship.

CHAPTER I

FIRST IMPRESSIONS (1939-1942)

Despite the work of recent date, it would be a mistake to ignore the first retrospective views of literary life in Paris, for they provide an immediate recollection of the period and present it as a completed whole, an opinion subsequently challenged after the war. In these pieces, by Gippius, Iswolsky and Fedotov, we are also introduced to an attitude towards émigré literature which will recur throughout much of the later criticism by émigrés, namely, the predilection for judging émigré literature according to their own ideas of what it ought to have been and might still be, rather than for what it actually was.

Turning to the very first attempt at portraying Russian Paris in the years 1920 to 1939, we can only regret that Gippius did not fully realise her "Istorija russskoj èmigrantskoj intelligencii", of which only an outline remains.¹ As Temira Pachmuss explains in her introduction to the first publication of this outline in 1972, Gippius felt a responsibility to posterity to record the rise and, as she saw it, the decline of the Russian intellectual and cultural life in Paris along the lines of her other political-philosophical memoirs, such as her Petersburg diary of 1914-1918² and her biography of her husband Dmitrij Merežkovskij.³ Despite its brevity this outline provides a useful framework for more detailed investigation of this period. Taking advantage of her central position in Russian Paris Gippius not only notes down such factual information as the founding of journals and political groups, but also inserts remarkably apt comments on the leading figures of the emigration. Ever loyal to her belief in the unity of all spheres of human endeavour Gippius manages to include most of the important tendencies and shifts in allegiance of the time, whether political, religious or literary, up to 1939 when Russian Paris as such ceased to function.

Dividing the period into four five-year plans ("Četyre pjatiletki") that is: 1920-1925, 1925-1930, 1930-1935, and 1935 to 1939, Gippius considered the years 1920-1930 to have been the most constructive ones, with the period from 1930 to be one of gradual disintegration. The most important aspect of émigré life for Gippius was a conscious opposition

to the Bolshevik régime, which in the first years of the emigration was very strong. As she notes for the years 1920-1925:

Старшее поколение, эмигранты прежние и новые, (пореволюционные) политики, писатели и др. тесно сплочены, как бы перед лицом общего врага (большевиков). Постоянное общение.⁴

The principal manifestations of this opposition was the establishment of the émigré press and “Načalo vsevozmožnich obščestv, konferencij, dokladov.”⁵ That Gippius considered meetings and journals and newspapers to be vital to the emigration is shown by her notes on the second phase (1925-1930) where she emphasises the inclusion of the younger generation of émigrés (i.e. those born c.1900-1905) in these enterprises. Having begun this section with the remark: “Staršee pokolenie ešče deržitsja vmeste, v nego bystro vtekaet sledujuščee”⁶ she mentions that in the newspaper (later journal) *Zveno*, “na rjadu so staršimi, učastvujut i molodye”.⁷ Of more importance from a literary point of view are her notes on her salon, known as “Voskresen’ja u Merežkovskich” and the more formally constituted group “Zelenaja lamp” with its affiliated journals *Novyj dom* and *Novyj korabl’*. She has this to say about “Zelenaja lamp”:

(..) доклады на всевозможные темы (о России, эмиграции, еврействе, поэзии...). Обо всем, о чем ведутся разговоры на „воскресеньях“. Но здесь возникают и страстные споры, так как сталкивается младшее поколение со старшим, которое, в этот период, тоже выступает в Зеленой лампе.⁸

Despite her own extreme and often intolerant views Gippius was still able to make distinctions which escaped other less impassioned commentators. In terms of the conflict between the two generations she would take sides depending on the particular issue at hand.

The other, and equally pressing, question was the increasing proliferation and division of political groups and their related journals. Again Gippius avoids oversimplification:

Медленное разделение на флаги правый (не совсем) и левый (тоже не совсем). Левое крыло — Эфрон, Слоним, — привлекают молодых в свои пражские журналы.⁹

thus introducing a geographical element.

The result of these divisions is considered by Gippius to be fatal for the emigration as a whole, and the third phase (1930-1935) is a series of failures:

Постепенная гибель почти всех журналов и надежд на Россию. Чувства

„послания“ и „миссии“ эмиграции сменяются тенденцией арривизма здесь.

Старшие: „политики“ — освободились; верчение в пустоте старого колеса но уклон влево. *Не-*политики, кто остался, почти не встречаются, редко и знают друг о друге.

Молодые: (ex-)начинают объединяться на Монпарнассе уже не по „идейному признаку“, а „по друзьям“.

Разочарование „ex-“ в литературной среде. Попытки (неудачные) поднять Монпарнасс.

Острое одиночество Поплавского, кот. до конца не поддался под тон „избранных“. Гибель Поплавского. (Note in the margin)¹⁰

Then finally for this period:

„Воскресенья“ продолжают. Текучи. С перебоями. Принцип тот же. Из первых — лишь 4-5 чел.

Зеленая Лампа зажигается редко, горит тускло.¹¹

The fourth and final period (1935-1939) is presented as one of complete disintegration and demoralisation. Against the backdrop of the general crisis in Europe of the pre-war years the émigrés became increasingly uncritical of Soviet policies, if not openly sympathetic. Again Gippius makes a distinction between the politically active and the non-political émigrés such as Bunin, Bal'mont, Šmelev and others who, although “ucelevšie, ešče bol'she raspylilis”¹² Of the political émigrés whom she calls the “byvšie” (meaning the former socialist-revolutionaries, social-democrats, Cadets etc.) she remarks ironically:

Острое международное положение и скандал с похищением Миллера и другими „большевицкими“ убийствами содействуют их общему „олевлению“...¹³

adding in the margin:

Эфрон и товарищи удрали в Москву, пропали... А „бывшие“ — все за оборону Сталина против Гитлера.¹⁴

Even more distressing for Gippius was the state of the younger generation which she saw as undergoing an inner death. She did not accept their complaint that they had nowhere to publish as sufficient reason for what she terms their: “poterja k obščim voprosam, skepsis i literaturnaja passivnost”¹⁵ She then describes the efforts of the former arch-social revolutionary convert to Orthodoxy Il'ja Bunakov-Fondaminskij to save the ex-youth of Montparnasse showing both her

scepticism of Fondaminskij's group and journal *Krug* and the literature produced by Montparnasse:

Круг. Частное общество, по идее устоителя (бывшего эсэра Фондаминского) — сближение его и его сверстников, левого толка, в большинстве — „политико-христиан“, — с ех-молодежью, почти сплошь литературной.

Сближение *Монпарнасса* с федото-бердяевской Мать-Марией пока не удастся. Не удастся и „литература“... Доклады — уже случайны несерьезны; нет „линии“.

Литература, в общем, свелась к полсотне „поэтов“. (in the margin: Не пересчитывать их!)

Всякие собрания, конференции, общества и т.д. уступают *вечерам поэзии*, где упомянутые десятки „поэтов“ читают свои стихи.¹⁶

Thus Gippius sees both generations arriving at an impasse by the late thirties though not in an identical way:

Отношение к общим (международным) событиям у *ех-молодых*: при болезненном внимании — растерянность и чувство бессилия (да и с кем идти? И куда?). (In the margin: Отношения „старших“ (кого?) мы не знаем, да и не важно. Отношение старших левых „политиков“ — при всем бессилии — левое и левеющее.).¹⁷

After this can only follow what Gippius considers the final betrayal of her earlier ideal of a united émigré cause and the second stage of inner death:

Недоверие всех ко всем. Это корень невозможности литературных или идейных союзов.

Остается личное отношение X к У, личные сходства и согласия. Но и они тусклы. Шатки.

Уход в личную жизнь, заранее обреченную.

(In the margin: Нежелание писать: „к чему?“ (Потеря, видно, всего, что было и хотелось сказать.)).¹⁸

Although we will be returning to this outline on various occasions in the future, particularly when discussing Gippius' literary criticism, the important points to remember are, first of all, how seriously Gippius took the "intellectual" emigration and secondly how all her hopes were centred on Paris émigrés as providing the only viable alternative to Bolshevik Russia. This single-mindedness helped concentrate her interests and gave her position a consistency lacking to most of the older

émigrés. At the same time her commitment to an integral philosophy of life, which dates back to her early career in Petersburg, blinded her to any form of divergent thought; thus she dismisses more or less in principle the literary efforts of Montparnasse because they are based too much on personal experience and not "po idejnomu priznaku". Even so we will see that on occasion Gippius was far more generous to the younger generation than this outline would imply.

With the two articles by Iswolsky and Fedotov which appeared in 1942, when both authors were living in America, we have the first published efforts at summing up the characteristics of Russian émigré literature before the war. Unlike Gippius (and Fedotov), Iswolsky in her "Twenty-Five Years of Russian Emigré Literature" tries to cover far too much material with too little detail.¹⁹ Writing in English for a non-Russian audience she obviously needed to simplify and to present those aspects of émigré literature which would be most accessible to those whose familiarity with Russian literature was still based on the nineteenth century tradition, namely the novels of Turgenev, Tolstoj and Dostoevskij. Neither a professional poet nor novelist herself Iswolsky feels free to comment on both the older and younger generation, on prose and poetry, on the development of Soviet and émigré literature, and then finally, to speculate on the future of Russian literature in general. It is only in passing that we are given some specific information on individual writers. Like Gippius, Iswolsky identifies literary creativity with the ideals of the old intelligentsia, but limits herself to "the great Russian humanist tradition"²⁰ as exemplified by Tolstoj and Dostoevskij, thus by-passing the revival of poetry in the Silver Age. Her highest praise is reserved then for the works of the émigré novelists Bunin, Šmelev, Osorgin and Aldanov, in regard to which she writes:

The general mood which pervades the works of the older generation described above, is pessimism. Their love of Russia is a melancholy, "Elysean" love; their attitude towards the present world is sombre and full of forebodings. Yet this pessimism is, as we have seen, "classical". It is steeped in harmony, expressed in a noble and measured style.²¹

Turning from the older generation to the younger, Iswolsky fails to make a distinction between the demands of prose and poetry. She can only see that the literature of the young is "neither harmonious nor classical". This she blames on their uprootedness and the influence of foreign writers:

Pessimism is also inherent in the younger generation. But it is neither harmonious nor classical. Born under the influence of modern Western writers, especially of Marcel Proust, André Gide, and James Joyce, the works of the younger émigré poets and novelists are complex and tormented. As we have said, they have no clear memory of Russia, no organic link with the past.²²

Iswolsky, as does Gippius, finds it difficult to accept poetry on its own terms. If Gippius can be said to have criticised the young for not writing "po idejnomu priznaku" then Iswolsky finds in them a lack of nationalism, as she shows in her comments on Cvetaeva (whom she reckons among the younger generation, despite her earlier career in Russia before emigrating):

...there is perhaps one very great poet, Marina Tsvetaeva, whose writings, both in prose and verse, rank among the best pieces of modern Russian literature. Their essential trait is that, though Tsvetaeva denies all "landmarks", she is more closely linked than the others to Russian soil and tradition. There is nothing typically "émigré" about her poems, they might have been written in Russia.²³

After Cvetaeva, Poplavskij is considered to be the most talented poet, however, it is not so much his poetry which appeals to Iswolsky as his diary with its theme of "Bogoiskatel'stvo" published after his death. Like many others she sees Poplavskij's life and death as symbolic of his generation and states that the literary group "Krug" was founded after his death "in order to create a more constructive, positive, and healthy atmosphere. It was an attempt to collect and consolidate such spiritual and cultural Russian forces as could dispel the shadows of pessimism."²⁴ Uncertain whether or not this could have been successful, she definitely accuses Adamovič of encouraging the pessimism of the young and Chodasevič of neglecting them. (We might note in this respect that Iswolsky does not mention the rôle of Gippius in directing the young).

True to her cult of the soil and the "great Russian humanist tradition" she could only hope that the young generation would eventually resist the temptations of Montparnasse;

Our belief is that the "disintegration of culture and personality", which seems characteristic of the young Russian émigré authors, was partly due to the influence of the modern school of French literature; these tendencies would have probably been overcome in due time, as the "decadent" trends of the beginning of the century have been overcome by the previous generation.²⁵

At any rate Iswolsky does have some hope for the future:

As a whole, this group of "junior" authors does not in any way confirm the assertion that a writer uprooted from his native soil is incapable of creation. It is already obvious that the second generation of cultural émigrés has not remained barren. Its most talented representatives belong to Russian literature as much as those who are living and writing in Russia. The day will come when the two currents will merge into one and when all temporary landmarks dividing them at present will finally disappear.²⁶

Turning to Fedotov's "O Parižskoj poëzii" also written in America against the background of the war, but for a Russian audience, we have the first attempt to define specifically the nature of the poetry written in Paris. On some basic points Fedotov agrees with either Gippius or Iswolsky. Like both of them he links the fate of Russian émigré culture as a whole with the literature of Paris, however unlike Iswolsky he has no faith in the present or future work of the younger generation, adopting Gippius' position that the period to 1939 forms a completed era in itself.

Но одно можно сказать с уверенностью, что парижская поэзия, в смысле русской парижской школы поэзии, кончилась навсегда. Кончилась не только она. Кончилась вся русская эмиграция с ее большим, нами еще не оцененным культурным делом. Эта война, каков бы ни был ее исход, изменит лицо мира. Новая жизнь начнется на развалинах. Новые эмиграции придут нам на смену. Но наше поколение, рабочая пора которого пришлось между двумя войнами — 1919-1939, — свое слово договорило до конца. Для будущего историка само оно и эпоха его, смутная и сумеречная, уже очерчены до последнего штриха.²⁷

Having defined this school in time he describes its other features. Arguing that just as such terms as classicism, romanticism, symbolism and decadence have their use in classifying writers of certain periods, so too with the Paris poets despite their differences: "na rasstojanii ešče sil'nee čuvstvuetsja obščaja, ležaščaja na nich pečat'".²⁸ He explains this common identity by a concept of a collective personality which in a literary school is grouped around a focus:

...в жизни соборные личности разбиваются на множество индивидуальных, из которых ни одна не воплощает целиком „идеи“. Но во всякой школе есть свой центр, или источник света, сообщающий всему контур и рельеф. Иногда таким средоточием бывает поэт (Пушкин), иногда критик (Рескин), иногда критик-поэт: Малларме, Вяч. Иванов. В Париже им был тоже критик-поэт: Адамович.²⁹

After elevating Adamovič to this position in Paris, and like Iswolsky without reference to Gippius or "Zelenaja lampa", Fedotov readily concedes that Chodasevič was certainly his equal in terms of talent,

intelligence and culture, but not influence. Stating that Paris was very fortunate in possessing two such "arbitri elegantiarum" he maintains that even so:

...вся воспитательная работа Ходасевича, все его усилия обучить молодежь классическому мастерству и привить ей свой дух уверенного в своей самоценности пушкинского художества не приводили ни к чему.³⁰

As this question of primacy will become one of the leading controversies of émigré criticism we will not dwell on it at length here; suffice it to say that according to Fedotov: "Ljudi, svobodnye ot nego, žili osobnjakom, 'dikimi', вне škol i grupp. Živja v Pariže, oni ne prinadležali k parižskoj škole".³¹ Such poets were, for different reasons, Cvetaeva, Ladinskij and Sofiev. In discussing Cvetaeva, Fedotov makes some significant points which have too often been forgotten. Instead of placing her in relation to the other Paris émigré poets he thinks it better to regard her either completely independently of all schools or as belonging to the "Moscow School". As he says: "Dlja nee parižskoe izgnanie bylo slučajnost'ju"³² and that if she was at home anywhere it was in Prague, which as we have seen in Gippius' opinion was as unacceptable as Moscow to Paris. Fedotov explains:

В Праге была своя поэтическая школа, гораздо более близкая к Москве... Была и попытка литературного объединения пражского стиля с ориентацией на советскую поэзию. Но „Кочевье“ не привилось в Париже. Парижские поэты не почувствовал его своим.³³

It is at this point that Fedotov makes his most important contribution to understanding the poetry of Paris according to its own criteria:

Среди всех зарубежных очагов русской поэзии Париж оказался, не только географически, наиболее далеким от советской России. Не одна Прага, но и Берлин и Рига, и Харбин и Шанхай были ближе к Москве, чем Париж. Что же? В этой установке Парижа нет ничего зазорного. Она имеет свое историческое оправдание. Конечно, искусство с трудом выживает вне родины. Ему и на чужбине легче жить отражениями родной поэзии. Но, ведь, московской поэзии достаточно и в Москве. Много ли пользы в зарубежных отражениях, в слабых повторениях все тех же оттисков? Но есть темы, запретные в России, выразить которые призван поэт-изгнанник. У него своя дорога, тернистая, мало обещающая, но требующая от него такой же верности, как родная земля. Только не земля, а дорога, ибо поэт эмиграции — странник по самой своей природе.³⁴

In this way Fedotov makes the claim, that the poetry of Paris, of all the centres of the emigration, was the most consciously and deliberately

"émigré". That this conception of the émigré poet is not to be confused with that of the "pevec belogo dviženija"³⁵ he makes clear in his comments on the nostalgic verse of Ladinskij (who having been a "soldat Rossijskoj Imperii"³⁶ will become characteristically a "Soviet Patriot" and return to Russia in 1948)³⁷ rather, the émigré poet is one who does not look to the past but who accepts that: "V èmigraciji dana absoljutnaja, ešče nebyvalaja svoboda i—bespočvennost".³⁸ Such an attitude leads the poet onto the path of total renunciation of all false beliefs and illusions, thus he is free: "issledovat' labirinti podsoznanija do so samogo dna".³⁹ However, if this is taken to its extreme it results in negation for the sake of negation and more importantly for the poet a rejection in principle of art and creativity. This, according to Fedotov, is what Adamovič demanded: "On ne ustaval povtorjat', što poèizija umerla, što nado perestat' pisat' stichi. No esli pisat', to nužno zabyt', što ich pišeš".⁴⁰ From such extreme nihilism Fedotov maintains there could have been a positive outcome:

В разложении, в имморализме есть своя негативная мистика, которая может в любой момент обернуться позитивной, как показывает история человеческого духа. До этой огненной точки никто из парижан не дошел.⁴¹

adding that of all the young poets Poplavskij was the closest to this state.

As far as Adamovič is concerned, Fedotov is careful to defend him from the accusation of complete cynicism by pointing out his devotion to Tolstoj and his joining the French army when the war began. In terms of his influence in literature he maintains:

...как воспитатель молодых поэтов, Адамович имеет одну бесспорную заслугу. Он отучил их от фальши, от условной красоты, от поэтического лексикона. Этого недостаточно, чтобы быть поэтом, но тому, кто не может ходить без ходуль, Адамович говорит: не ходи, не пиши стихов, пиши прозу. Не его вина, если не все его слушают.⁴²

After this Fedotov briefly mentions the poets most in line with the Paris School aesthetics, Lidija Červinskaja and Anatolij Štejger, as well as those who were more independent, Georgij Ivanov, Irina Odoevceva and Vladimir Smolenskij. He then discusses the pre-revolutionary origins of the Paris School, citing the work of Annenskij, as brought by Adamovič from Petersburg, as the main inspiration. Second to Annenskij was Lermontov. In the eternal struggle between Puškin and Lermontov he says:

...вопреки отцам, парижане утверждают культ младшего поэта... Пушкин слишком ясный и земной, слишком утверждает жизнь и слишком закончен в своей форме. Парижане ощущают землю, скорее как ад, и хотят развивать всякие найденные формы, становящиеся оковами. Лермонтов им ближе, злой и нежный, неустоявшийся, в страстях земли тоскующий о небе.⁴³

Finally, he ends his article by insisting that even if it did not include all the Russian poets of Paris there was still a "Paris School": "Otnimite školu, i ostanutsja tol'ko otdel'nye golosa, prodolžajuščie perepevi dorevoljucionnoj russkoj — preimuščestvenno petersburgskoj — poëzii".⁴⁴

Although these three pieces are themselves not of great depth or detail, they do serve the purpose of bringing together the basic elements of what has become known as the Paris School. First of all, whatever else they disagree on, Gippius, Iswolsky and Fedotov realise the historical significance of the effort by the émigré intellectuals to form a cultural life of their own, and more importantly, the rôle played by the younger generation in Paris. Secondly they conceive of the period as a self-contained era, with a special atmosphere different from Prague, Berlin or Riga, which expressed itself primarily in an inward looking poetry. At the same time, however, we must remember that these three authors belonged to the older generation, and that with the exception of Gippius they did not write poetry; thus they could easily take a condescending view of the younger poets of Montparnasse, which has unfortunately often been repeated since then.

CHAPTER II

THE FIFTIES

Whatever their opinions about Russian émigré culture and the specific meaning of the pre-war years, the writers of the fifties testify to the renewed vitality of the emigration after the war and their continued interest in defining their position and history in the West. It is to these authors that we owe the most substantial and informative literature on the 1920-1940 period. At the same time, one must remember that for them émigré literature is still very much a present concern, and that they often write about the pre-war years in relation to the developments of the fifties. Thus, the Paris School and the Paris Note are seen by some as existing beyond the confines of the dates 1920-1940. This debate over the survival and relevance of the Paris aesthetic is also combined with considerations of its effect on the new emigration arriving from the former Baltic and East European centres of emigration and from the Soviet Union. Interesting as this post-war scene may be, few would deny that there was a definite break in the continuity of the cultural institutions of Russian Paris between 1940 and 1950, particularly in regard to the major journals, newspapers and publishing houses which all but disappeared under the German occupation. In any case, whatever general continuity one might be able to find after the war, many of the most important figures of both generations of the earlier period, such as Gippius, Chodasevič, Poplavskij and Štejger, only survive as literary memories and influences. It seems thus appropriate that we do not involve ourselves in the current polemical aspects of the literature of the fifties but limit ourselves to its treatment of the twenties and thirties.

(In order to place the opinions which follow in the context of the Paris School, it should be noted that, while Jurij Ivask and Gleb Struve were always *au courant* with developments in Paris, they never spent much time there. Jurij Terapiano, Vladimir Varšavskij and Nina Berberova, however, belonged to many Paris based groups and knew such people as Gippius, Chodadsevič and Poplavskij extremely well.)

Although Jurij Ivask's article of 1950 "O poslevoennoj èmigrantskoj poëzii"¹ ostensibly confirms the idea of the continuity of poetry in

Paris, most of his examples come from the pre-war period. The starting point for the article is the publication of an anthology of émigré verse *Ėstafeta* which appeared in 1948. Ivask's first remarks about Paris remind us of Fedotov's article of 1942:

В Париже, который до сих пор остается столицей русской эмиграции, все еще преобладают, хотя и не господствуют прежние, уже давно хорошо знакомые настроения русского Монпарнасса и его главного законодателя Адамовича. Он и теперь почти монополярный „заказчик“ поэтов... Правда, очень многие не следуют его „заказу“, но попрежнему не могут не считаться с его мнением.²

He then points out the merits of Adamovič's position which escaped Gippius and Iswolsky:

„Заказ“ Адамовича никогда не отличался четкостью. У него нет никакого литературного плана действий, как у Брюсова в „Бесах“, у Гумилева в „Аполлоне“, у футуристов в их многочисленных манифестах, но за это никак нельзя осуждать. Программы литературных школ в лучшем случае переживают одно десятилетие, а затем обычно вызывают только ироническую улыбку или недоумение...

Значение Адамовича в том, что он, метр, уклоняющийся от каких бы ни было формулировок, сумел создать литературную атмосферу для зарубежной поэзии в парижских кафе; и „флюиды“ этой атмосферы передавались и передаются далеко за пределы Парижа...³

The poetry of this atmosphere, according to Ivask, is lyrical and seeks through the intense analysis of the inner and outer world a vision of the “samoe glavnoe”.⁴ Following Fedotov, Ivask traces the aesthetics of Adamovič back to Annenskij to his “somnenie v forme... somnenie v kul'ture...i toska po nastojaščej vere”⁵ which Ivask considers were adopted not only by Adamovič but by all Montparnasse:

Но почему именно Анненский оказался так убедителен для русских зарубежных поэтов?

По Адамовичу — после гибели надежд в пору революции, в несчастных условиях эмиграции, на берегах Сены, и на всех вообще чужих берегах, всякая „уверенная в себя“ поэзия невозможна. Именно поэтому он так полюбил героиню Марины Цветаевой, которая оказалась слишком сильным поэтом для эмиграции...⁶

However, as will be seen later, it is necessary to make a distinction between Adamovič's “anti-heroic” position which was generally accepted and his extreme “anti-poetics” which were not.

After discussing the careers of various poets of the first emigration after the war (the “ex-young”), Ivask considers the poets of the new

emigration. Although their poetry is beyond the confines of this work, Ivask's remarks help explain the difficulty they had in writing criticism of the Paris School (e.g. Vladimir Markov in 1958):

Есть ли в их стихах нечто общее им всем? Да, есть: это витальность, бодрый тон, который чувствуется даже, когда они говорят, что жизнь невыносима... Ведь разьедающих душу и опустошающих соблазнов и ужасов одиночества они не знают.⁷

The final part of Ivask's article is devoted to reflections on the relation between émigré and Western European literature. There is no doubt in his mind that the émigrés belong to European culture, but only through their own Russian European tradition. This means that if, on the one hand, they seem immune to the latest developments in modern literature the émigré poets have, on the other hand, resisted the dangers of such anti-Western ideologies as "Eurasianism":

Хотя именно в эмиграции возникла евразийская (анти-западническая) доктрина, тем не менее, очевидно, что эмигрантский духовно-душевный облик — не евразийский, а русско-европейский, и не потому только, что большинство интеллектуальных эмигрантов до сих пор проживает в Европе. Нет, прежде всего потому что они принадлежат к старой петербургской культуре.⁸

In touching upon the essential cultural conservatism of the emigration, Ivask claims that the poetry of the younger generation derives from a Russian source, in contradiction to Iswolsky's theory of modern French influences:

Если мы от Европы Рильке и Валери обратимся к эмигрантской поэзии, то ее узость станет нам очевидной... Поэзия же поэтов, ищущих новых путей, слишком отзывается чудачеством. Правда, благодаря традициям (все слабеющим) Серебряного века, эмигрантские поэты обычно достигают общеобязательного культурного опыта... Еще пленяет в лучших эмигрантских вещах та душевность и простая человечность, в которой, может быть, заключается основная сила русской литературы.⁹

In Ivask's emphasis on the qualities of the young émigré poets, their lack of artistic doctrines, their aloofness from political extremism and their loyalty to Russian tradition we find an apologia for the Paris School which will be developed later by other members of the younger generation. In this regard Ivask presents an ideal for modern Russian poetry and a warning against what he regards as the last temptation of the émigré poet, messianic nationalism. Basing his argument on Rilke's own experience of a cult of Russia which he later outgrew, without,

however, abandoning his belief that Russia had effected a profound change in his inner life, Ivask also recalls what others will see as the best aspects of the Paris School itself:

Неужели неясно, что последней правды нельзя ждать не от одного народа, ни от человечества, как это мечталось старым немецким романтикам и французским утопистам? Лучшие старые традиции Европы... говорят нам не о правде народа или человечества, а о правде человека и об образе и подобии Божиим в человеке.

Национальный и общечеловеческий (и, конечно, классовый) мессианизм — великое заблуждение, оболечение. Мессия — это не многие, это один, это человек. Но отрицание национального мессианизма не означает отрицания патриотизма. В частности, нельзя не любить родной язык; ведь только на нем каждый из нас может рассказать о нашем современном опыте — не только о наших настроениях и чудачествах, но также о необходимости борьбы с последними идолами, в особенности с идолами национализма.¹⁰

It is only in 1953 with the publication of Jurij Terapiano's memoirs *Vstreči*¹¹ that we have the first chance of looking at the subject of poetry in Paris from the point of view of one of the "exyoung". This will be followed by a more elaborate study by Terapiano in 1959: "Sorokaletie russkoj zarubežnoj poëzii". Although Terapiano does not deny the continuing interest in poetry in Paris, he is quite certain that the specifically Paris Note of the pre-war years belongs now entirely to history:

Надежды, предчувствия, угадания, воля, сила сопротивления, слабость, бессилие, разочарование, — все то, что составляло биение пульса поколения тридцатых годов, нашло свой конец всякого литературного поколения.

Что осталось от атмосферы символизма и акмеизма — теперь? От того неповторимого общего состояния, духовного и душевного, в котором они черпали энергию, пафос, ощущение значительности?

Поэтам будущих десятилетий, если им случится ознакомиться с атмосферой парижской поэзии тридцатых годов, которую Поплавский назвал „парижской нотой“, будет также трудно восстановить ее общее мироощущение, ее творческий стовор, как нам самим, например, представить себе полностью эпоху символизма.¹²

Even if it is no longer a dominant force the Paris Note can still serve as some kind of inspiration, and perhaps because it is an influence Terapiano feels obliged to prevent further misinterpretations and to explain its original ethos:

Однако, после каждой литературной эпохи, какова бы она ни была (если это не просто безвременье, как восьмидесятые годы) остается неповторимо личный отблеск.

И это „обманувшее сияние“, быть может, самое ценное, частица опыта, результат взлетов и срывов, жизнь поэзии...

О „парижской ноте“ в свое время много говорилось и писалось. Были у него горячие защитники, были и враги, а также — „истолкователи“, избравшие ее в кривом зеркале, из числа „не-парижан“, знавших о ней понаслышке.¹³

The first point he makes is that in the early stages of emigration the attitude to literature was determined by the belief that sooner or later conditions would change in Russia and the émigrés would return. Their most important task, therefore, was to preserve the continuity of Russian culture, literature in particular, for the future. Were they to create anything in exile it would necessarily have to be on a small scale expressing only what they had recently experienced.

Сквозь нищету и голод, сквозь беспризорность и одиночество, в чужой и чуждой нам (несмотря ни на какие „преемственности культуры“, „Лувры“ и „Дрезденские музеи“) Европы, какие-то юноши надеялись донести до дома, так, чтоб не погас на ветру, маленький огонек: две-три строчки, несколько слов, в которых, как они верили, отразится самое важное, скажется то, чего нельзя сказать, откроется новая, по-своему, не так, как прежде, услышанная музыка.¹⁴

Lyric poetry thus became the principal literary medium throughout the emigration despite the difficult realities of émigré life and the scepticism and indifference of the non-literary emigration.

In discussing the poetry of Paris Terapiano distinguishes in the 20's three phases. In the first, despite his remarks on the aloofness of the émigrés to European culture, he recalls the short-lived enthusiasm of the young poets for both French and Russian modernism:

Вывезенное из России: влияние Маяковского, Есенина, Пастернака, знакомство с новейшими французскими течениями (дадаизм, сюрреализм, затем Аполлинер и Рэмбо) — вот начало.

В смутном стремлении определить свое лицо, поэты первого периода искали себя, по преимуществу в „формальной новизне“.¹⁵

Around 1925 there is a reaction to this which forms the second phase:

Вопрос о соотношении формы и содержания повлек за собой переоценку ценностей. Новизне формы была противопоставлена идея одухотворенного искусства, впервые заговорили тогда о возвращении к классицизму.

Для второй половины 20-их годов характерны попытки критически разобраться в ближайшем наследстве, сочетать формальную традицию акмеизма с символизмом — с тем, что было в нем о „вечной“ теме — о любви, о смерти, о Боге.¹⁶

Although there might have been a return to classicism Terapiano maintains that a revival of Acmeism and Symbolism as such would have been impossible, for the same reasons that made modernism unacceptable; they simply failed to answer sufficiently to the experience of Russians since the disasters of revolution, civil war and emigration. In this regard Terapiano cites the reassessment of Blok and Gumilev by the émigré poets:

Ритм нарастающей катастрофы, выразителем которого перед революцией явился Блок, после уже совершившейся катастрофы, требовал других предчувствий. Как выйти из тупика, в котором оказался послереволюционный человек, на опыте испытывавший крушение всех тех ценностей, которыми вдохновлялись предшествующие поколения?

Поэзия Гумилева, как реакция против символизма, как утверждение простой и здоровой жизни на время увлекла многих. Но трещина, образовавшаяся в душах „детей страшных лет России“, отравленность пережитым, невозможность забыть о гибели, о смерти, и сознании, что образивавшуюся в душах пустоту уже не заполнить одними словами и красивыми образами, отвращение от риторики и неискренности — вот истоки того ощущения, которое сделалось общим в начале 30-х годов.¹⁷

It is with such re-evaluations that the third phase ends in the late twenties giving way to the formation of the Paris Note in the 1930's.

As Terapiano repeats much of the rest of his analysis, but in more detail in his article of 1959, suffice it to remark for the present that one of the most important aspects of the Paris Note, according to Terapiano, is that it arose spontaneously as the inevitable result of the historical and literary circumstances the émigrés found themselves in. He does not then credit any one poet or critic with its creation:

Почему атмосфера 30-х годов возникла так неожиданно, казалось бы, среди общего расхождения и разногласия?

Почему споры умолкли сами собой и самые удаленные друг от друга вдруг оказались согласными?

Основное в „парижской ноте“, то, что возникло действительно органически, это вопрос о современном человеке, о его внутреннем состоянии, о его отношении к внешним событиям и к духовным вопросам.

С появлением темы о человеке 30-х годов явилось свое собственное ощущение, ощущение действительно новое, т.е. неповторимо-личное.

Не важно, было ли это новое ощущение поддержано блистательными „частными случаями“: стал бы Поплавский вторым Блоком или не стал, атмосфера 30-годов от этого бы не изменилась.¹⁸

notably, thus, depriving Adamovič of the rôle of mentor attributed to him by all the other opinions we have so far examined.

Unfortunately we can expect no major revelations from Adamovič himself on the development of the Paris School in either his book *Odinočestvo i svoboda* or his article "Poèzija v èmigracii" which both appeared in 1955.¹⁹ Although one could see this lack of a thorough analysis on the part of one of the leading figures of Russian literature in Paris as a sign of Adamovič's inherent weakness as a critic, as did Gleb Struve in his review of *Odinočestvo i svoboda*²⁰, it is only fair to consider first Adamovič's own view of his position. In the preface and introduction to *Odinočestvo i svoboda*, which is devoted mainly to memoirs on prose writers of the older generation Adamovič states that the writing of history of émigré literature and the making of judgements on it are best left to future generations.²¹ If it seems as though some critics have been successful in evaluating this literature it is only because they have over-simplified the issues, usually he adds, for semi-political motives which have long been the curse of Russian criticism.²² In the case of émigré literature, of course, the basically non-literary approaches have led to two extreme positions; one would maintain that no creativity can exist in exile, and the other, that as Soviet Russia is a cultural wasteland the future of Russian literature can only be sought amongst the émigrés.²³ In trying to avoid such pointless arguments Adamovič limits himself to either purely personal opinions or to those aspects of émigré literature which are beyond doubt.²⁴ Still addressing the critics of émigré literature Adamovič takes up their accusation that, even if one cannot deny that the emigration produced valuable works, it did not produce any "great" ones.²⁵ This reproach against émigré writers for a supposed failure in their mission was as much an obstacle to the perception of émigré literature during its early development as it is to its study in the present. If the émigrés managed to create anything worthwhile it is precisely because they resisted the "zakazy" imposed on them by the politically motivated critics which together with the general indifferences to literature throughout the emigration made the work of both the older and younger generations a "podvig" regardless of the results.²⁶ After summarizing the problems faced by the prose writers and the lack of contact with Soviet literature Adamovič turns to the younger generation. He places a great deal of blame on the older generation for failing to take notice of them properly, and then describes their frustration in their attempts to be published. According to Adamovič the initial neglect of the young was caused by the belief amongst the émigrés in an imminent return to Russia, with this in mind it did not seem necessary to cultivate the next generation's talents:

Упреки старшим писателям в полной беззаботности насчет преемственности несправедливы прежде всего потому, что эти писатели не предвидели, насколько эмиграция затянется... Преемственность мысленно переносилась в Россию, где возникла бы она сама собой, без заботы о ней... Лишь позднее начали вкрадываться сомнения относительно срока пребывания на чужой земле, и вопрос о „смене“ перестал мало-помалу быть вопросом чисто-теоретическим. Но вольно или невольно, зло уже было сделано.²⁷

In many ways, then, this inability to be published was one of the causes of the Paris Note, not as others will maintain, its effect. In other words the pessimism of the young was as much practical as philosophical:

Как бы ни были интересны или глубокомысленны догадки о том, откуда и почему в отвлеченном, общественно-историческом плане эта „нота“ возникла, не будет ее искажением признать, что чувство насильственно-навязанного литературного одиночества сыграло в ее образовании известную роль. Парижская „нота“ — будто бутылка в море: „когда-нибудь, кто-нибудь прочтет, узнает, поймет. В настоящем надеяться не на кого и не на что“.²⁸

Even though he does not feel qualified to speak for them, Adamovič takes great pains to defend them and points out that in the given context their alienation from the French and their attachment to Russia, their disdain for practical work and their preoccupation with death were perfectly natural and understandable. As did Terapiano, Adamovič does not wish to make distinctions between talents in these remarks; for him the important point is that this generation carried out its “podvig” honourably and without any recognition or recompense. In his concluding chapter “Somnenija i nadeždy” Adamovič returns to the idea that the future historian should take as much interest in the general trends of the pre-war period as in creating a hierarchy of talent and achievement. He maintains that no one will deny the vitality of this era and the intensity with which all aspects of literary and philosophical questions were treated, whether in writing or in conversation. Finally, he explains that it was this very devotion to total honesty and the right to doubt and question everything which made any real *rapprochement* with Soviet Russian literature impossible.

In his article, also of 1955, “Poëzija v èmigracii” Adamovič addresses the subject of the development of the Paris School with more seriousness and in far more detail, although he admits that his first impulse is to be ironic in his usual fashion or to be over-ambitious and attempt to imitate Blok’s “Baedeker” guide “O sovremennom sostojanii

russkogo simbolizma", which would require him to translate into the prose of criticism the essence of poetry.

In following his account of the Paris School it is interesting to note how much he is in agreement with both the view which grants him a central position in Paris as well as that which does not (Terapiano). If we examine the various articles in his favour (Fedotov, Ivask) we see that the claim is always made for Adamovič's rôle as a catalyst, as the creator not of a school, but of an atmosphere. This is a view which he not only does not refute but which corresponds precisely to his own interpretations of the aims of the Paris School. Like Terapiano he says its value and importance lie in the fact that it did not follow the pattern of a conventional literary movement based on an artificial programme but developed freely as the natural consequence of the immediate cultural past of Russia and as a justified response to the realities of émigré life.

Somewhat along the lines of Terapiano Adamovič delineates the first phase of the formation of the Paris School; he describes the elements which served as its foundation, the way they were re-assessed in the context of émigré Paris, and the rôle French poetry played in this process. In terms of the origins of the school Adamovič mentions first those poets who found their way to Paris and who formed the nucleus, as well as those who did not. Even the leading figures, however, are not depicted without reservations:

„Мы“ — три-четыре человека, еще бывшие петербуржцами в то время, когда в Петербурге умер Блок, позднее обосновавшиеся в Париже; несколько парижан младших, иного происхождения, у которых с первоначальными „нами“ нашелся общий язык; несколько друзей, географически далеких, словом то, что возникло в русской поэзии вокруг „оси“ Петербург-Париж... Иногда это теперь определяется как парижская „нота“...

В Париже не все сложилось сразу, беспрепятственно, и общего сотрудничества на первых порах не было. В петербургские трагические воспоминания вплетались остатки гумилевской, цеховой выучки, очень наивной, если говорить о сущности поэзии, очень полезной, если ограничиться областью поэтического ремесла. Кто был рядом? Ходасевич, принципиально хмурившийся, напоминавший о Пушкине и о грамотности, „верно, но неинтересно“, как отзывался на его наставления Поплавский. Был воскресный салон Мережковских, с Зинаидой Николаевной которая понимала в поэзии все, решительно все, кроме самых стихов... Была еще Марина Цветаева, с которой у нас что-то с самого начала не клеилось... Цветаева была москвичкой, с вызовом петербургскому стилю в каждом движении и каждом слове: настроить нашу „ноту“ в лад ей было невозможно иначе, как исказив ее.²⁹

Having cast doubts on certain features of the older Russian tradition, Adamovič goes on to criticise directly those links between French and Russian poetry which he finds unacceptable; he explains why these points of contact failed to develop and the directions in which the two literatures subsequently have moved. For Adamovič modern French, and in general West European poetry, is characterised by a rejection of logical forms of speech and images in favour of free association and formlessness. Although this can be understood as a natural reaction to centuries of French rationalism Adamovič sees in it a deeper desire for pure escapism from all demands of reason and truth and a poetry which can only offer “des roses sur le néant”.³⁰ In direct contrast Russian poetry is committed to the search for truth. Recalling the debates on first and second generation Symbolism Adamovič argues that despite all his excesses Blok offered more to Russian poetry than Gumilev because of his preoccupation with the task of “preobraženie mira”. Gumilev’s Acmeism and Guild for all their familiarity were not sources of inspiration as they were too close to the French school centred on matters of form and technique.

If the re-emergence of Russian attitudes was not enough to convince the émigré poets of the need to abandon all artificial literary “-isms”, then historical circumstances did. Faced for the first time in Russian history with almost absolute freedom of expression the émigré poet resisted, however, all “literaturnye razvlečenija” after a short phase of experimentation.³¹ This was followed by a desire for “poetry of the absolute” or “absolute poetry”, which after a certain point excludes any possibility of creativity.³² If poetry were to be written at all it would have to be as concentrated and sincere as possible; it would also have to be loyal to the requirements of reason and thought. As a result of this artistic régime Adamovič maintains that the émigré poets made an important discovery, that genuine poetry can exist independently of technical considerations:

Одним из открытий наших, — которое заслуживает названия открытия, конечно, только в личном плане, никак не в общем историко-литературном значении, — было то, что стихи можно писать как угодно, т.е. как кому хочется. От школ, от метода, от „измов“ колебания и изменения происходит лишь такие, которые напоминают рябь на поверхности реки: ленивое или сильное, глубокое или мелкое, остается таким же, как было бы при полной тишине или сильной буре. Чутье — если оно есть, — подсказывает метод верный, т.е. соответствующий тому, что каждый поэт в отдельности хочет выразить.³³

Unfortunately Adamovič then makes a second “discovery”; if formally “imperfect” poetry is acceptable then “perfect” poetry is unacceptable. This reasoning serves as the basis of his anti-Puškinism and his cult of Lermontov. He believes that the very imperfections of Lermontov hint at a greater unattainable poetry which escaped Puškin and which cannot be found in his polished verse, thus making the younger poet the ideal for Russian Paris.³⁴ Finally, there is the inevitable mention of Annenskij which Adamovič is content to leave unexplained and unrelated to the rest of his article:

Другое имя, может быть менее „святое“, но не менее магическое — Анненский. Во французском нашем смущении его роль была не ясна, и казался он иногда перебежчиком в чуждый лагерь (не враждебный, а именно чуждый), вопреки всему тому русскому, что в его бессмертных стихах звучит. У Анненского в противоположность Блоку поэзия иногда превращается в ребусы, даже в таком стихотворении, как „О, нет, не стан...“, с его удивительной, ничем не подготовленной последней строфой. Но Анненский — это даже не пятый акт человеческой души, а растерянный шепот перед спустившимся занавесом, когда остается только идти домой, а дома в сущности никакого нет.³⁵

It is hard to imagine a more striking contrast than that presented between the two works of Adamovič of 1955 and Gleb Struve's *Russkaja literatura v izgnanii* which appeared in the following year.³⁶ The fact that this book has never been replaced in the field and has gone into a second edition in 1984 virtually unchanged has made it the standard work on émigré literature. Ironically, this was not the intention of the author. As the subtitle indicates it is an “opyt istoričeskogo obzora zarubežnoj literatury” whose purpose Struve explains in the forward. Despite the fact that his thoroughness, objectivity and bio-bibliographical detail are superior to the majority of such studies he himself, like the rest of the émigré critics, did not believe it possible in the fifties to write a definitive or critical history of émigré literature, for those reasons with which we are already familiar, namely: the continuing existence of the Russian emigration, the fact that many of the older and younger generations were still alive and working as of 1955 and the lack of full documentation for all the centres of the emigration. With these points in mind Struve states the goal of his book:

Можно лишь подвести какие-то предварительные итоги, составить, так сказать, приблизительный инвентарь этого первого периода. Это будет полезно и как материал для будущего историка, и для осведомления той „новой эмиграции“, приток которой изменил лицо русского Зарубежья и которая ничего или почти ничего о раннем периоде эмиграции не знает.

Это и является целью предлагаемой вниманию читателя книги. Она не притязает быть ни полной и окончательной историей русской зарубежной литературы в периоде между 1920-1939 гг., ни критическим подведением итогов. Это лишь первый опыт исторического обзора.³⁷

Thus, if Struve's book is used now as an authoritative reference work for émigré literature as a whole, in terms of specific areas of investigation it is still best used as a "point de départ".

In part one of *Russkaja literatura v izgnanii* Struve covers the first years of the emigration beginning with the circumstances in which the émigré writers left Russia, the dates of their departures and their places of settlement. The importance of this information lies in the fact that it underscores the fluidity of the period 1920-1924 when there was not only possible movement between Soviet Russia and the rest of Europe, but also when many writers were still in a state of transit between various centres of emigration. This fluidity is reflected in the literature of the time which is dominated by political considerations and the immediacy of the Revolution. Berlin flourishes as the most active centre at first on account of the economic conditions of post-war Germany and the recognition by the Weimar government of the Soviet régime which allowed contact between Soviet citizens and émigrés, a contact not possible elsewhere and soon to be curtailed in Germany itself. This anomalous situation was furthered by various movements within the emigration which in one way or another tried to reconcile the émigrés to the Soviet régime, such as the "Smena vech" group in Prague and the journal *Novaja russkaja kniga* in Berlin. The artificiality of maintaining a unity of purpose between émigré and Soviet literature was recognised first by the Soviet authorities themselves and then by the émigrés:

Вообще иллюзии единства советской и зарубежной литературы были в ближайшие же год-два разрушены. Со стороны советской власти эти иллюзии перестали встречать поощрение, как только она убедилась, что сменовеховское движение выдыхается и больших практических результатов не принесет...

С другой стороны, та часть эмиграции, которая не соблазнилась призывами и посулами сменовеховцев, по мере укрепления советского режима все более осознала свое эмигрантское призвание, как носительницы национального духа и хранительницы традиций культуры и свободы, и, пережив первый шок вынужденного отрыва от родины, возвращалась к творческой деятельности. Те же, кто в первые годы литературного сосуществования в Берлине находили возможным сидеть между двух стульев

или выжидать у моря погоды, должны были теперь выбирать между возвращением в Россию и переходом на эмигрантское положение.³⁸

With this inevitable hardening of divisions Berlin loses its rôle as a leading centre of Russian literature and gives way to Paris which had long been the political capital of the emigration. Here were founded the principal émigré newspapers and journals based on the remnants of the old pre-revolutionary political parties, mostly of the anti-Bolshevik left. Struve stresses the importance of the journal *Sovremennye zapiski* as uniting all that was best of the emigration, and which can be seen as setting the tone for the literature of the Paris School in particular, with its "ssylka na fevral'skuju revoljuciju 1917 goda i kategoričeskoe otverženie revoljucii oktjabr'skoj".³⁹ The rise of the other journals will be considered later when there is a specific link between them and a particular aspect of the Paris School.

In surveying the work of the years 1920-1925 Struve avoids making general remarks of any kind, providing instead brief portraits of individual prose-writers and poets. Of the poets belonging to the older generation he lists Bal'mont, Gippius, Cvetaeva and Chodasevič as being the most productive in this period. It is only when he considers the rise of the younger generation that he begins the discussion of the existence of separate schools of poetry. His first remarks recall some of the earlier statements by Terapiano and others about an interim phase in the early twenties of experimentation which soon ended without much success and without having much influence on later developments:

И в поэзии, и в прозе главный вклад младшего поколения зарубежной литературы — тех, кто не привез с собой за границу большого литературного багажа — принадлежит к более позднему периоду. В первое пятилетие успели обратить на себя внимание лишь немногие, и далеко не все из этих немногих в дальнейшем удержались в литературе. Молодых поэтов было больше, чем начинающих прозаиков, а потому мы начнем с первых.

Если в последующие годы стало принято говорить о „парижской ноте“ и о „парижской школе“ в зарубежной поэзии (не всегда с достаточным основанием), то в самые первые годы эмиграции (1920-22) можно было различить два главных географических центра, в которых сосредоточены были молодые поэты: Париж и Берлин...

Пожалуй, главная разница в эти первые годы между парижскими и берлинскими молодыми поэтами заключалась в том, что парижские стояли далеко от пореволюционной русской литературы и вместе с тем испытывали гораздо более сильное влияние окружающей иноземной среды, где в это время царил дадаизм.⁴⁰

Amongst these were Valentin Parnach, Mark Talov, Georgij Evangulov, Aleksandr Ginger and Boris Božnev. Of them only Ginger continued to be part of the Paris School, and even then only peripherally.

In part two "Zarubežnaja literatura samoopredeljaetsja: 1925-1939" Struve provides a concise guide to the various literary groups, journals and publishing houses of this period, as well as listing the authors and the works attached to them. In pursuing a policy of strict objectivity and by covering so much material, Struve refrains from the sort of personal interpretations and impressions we have come to associate with the majority of émigré views of the subject. This does not mean, however, that Struve has no opinions, rather that he always backs them with a definite source or quotation.

Some of Struve's most revealing remarks on the Paris School in terms of its efforts to define itself are made in the first chapter of part two "Obščaja charakteristika perioda". After calling the period of the late twenties and early thirties the "rascvet zarubežnoj literatury"⁴¹ he describes the specific forces at play. He speaks favourably of Gippius and the "Zelenaja lampa" group as cultivating the minds and talents of the young and then turns to the debate about émigré literature which raged from 1926 involving principally Chodasevič, Adamovič and Gippius in Paris as well as Slonim and A.L. Bem in Prague. As we will be returning to this debate later with some of the original material we will mention here only Struve's deductions. The basic argument as initiated by the poetry editor of *Sovremennye zapiski* M.O. Cetlin, was that the young generation of writers having been cut off at such an early age from Russian life would necessarily be unable to create anything worthwhile in exile. What the older generation awaited in particular was a "great" novel "iz žizni" in line with the nineteenth century tradition and which, considering the uninspiring and un-Russian circumstances of émigré life, they despaired of seeing.⁴² Struve then shows how critics like Adamovič and Chodasevič tended to reinforce this pessimism, although for different reasons. Struve is particularly apt at disclosing the weakness and impracticality of Adamovič's position, which argued, without any result, that as the only source of "pafos žizni", which he considered to be essential for Russian literature, could be found in Soviet Russia, the émigrés would have to carry on a "dialogue" with Soviet literature. Two foot notes by Struve form the best commentary on this aspect of Adamovič's career:

При желании в этих дальнейших рассуждениях на ту же тему можно увидеть зародыш тех настроений, которые после войны привели Адамовича к приятию — на расстоянии — советского режима, сотрудничеству в течение нескольких лет в про-советских „Русских Новостях“ и к „оправданию“ — если не прославлению — Сталина в книге, написанной для французов *L'Autre Patrie*, Paris, 1947.

Больше чем двадцать лет спустя, в статье „Одиночество и свобода“, являющейся как бы введением к книге критических этюдов о зарубежной литературе, Адамович снова возвращался к этой мысли, несколько варьируя ее, но опять без всяких пояснений: „...жаль становится все-таки, что диалога с Советской Россией в эмигрантской литературе не налажилось. Или хотя бы — монолога, туда обращенного, без надежды и расчета на внятный ответ, с одним лишь вычитыванием между строк в приходящих откуда книгах“ (стр. 22-23). Адамовичу можно было бы ответить, что в каком то смысле многое, если не все, в зарубежной литературе является „монологом“, обращенным туда и остающимся без ответа, а также, что „вычитывание между строк“ и без того шло все время. Но ведь он все время с наивным упрямством настаивал на „разговоре“, на *диалоге*, а это совсем не то. Для диалога необходимы все стороны с одинаковой волей к разговору.⁴³

After considering briefly the opinion of Bem that by 1928 émigré literature had gained ascendancy over Soviet literature, which was succumbing to the exigencies of Socialist Realism, Struve discusses Chodasevič's contribution to the debate which was partly directed against Adamovič's idea of the de facto impossibility of creation in exile:

У Ходасевича не было иллюзии насчет реального состояния зарубежной литературы — он вообще не впадал в иллюзии, был склонен к пессимизму — но он считал скептическое отношение к самой возможности существования эмигрантской литературы теоретически несостоятельным. Трагедию эмигрантской литературы он видел в другом — не в том, что она эмигрантская, а в забвении ею своего „эмигрантства“... Ходасевич отбрасывал мрачные предсказания насчет зарубежной литературы, исходившие из ее отрыва от национальной почвы.⁴⁴

As this is based on one of Chodasevič's major pieces on the subject⁴⁵ we will analyse it in more detail later with his other criticism. In the end Struve notes that however positive Chodasevič might have been in theory, in terms of judging the results of émigré efforts he was far more pessimistic than Adamovič and might have been strongly biased by his own feeling of arriving at a creative impasse. Thus, despite his general admiration for the quality of Chodasevič's criticism, Struve in no way approves of his attitude to the literature of the thirties; rather he stresses the success of the young in launching *Čisla* and in organising groups

such as "Sojuz molodych poetov i pisatelej", "Perekrestok", and "Kočev'e" which arranged readings and the publication of "sborniki".⁴⁶ That some of this literature was not to Chodasevič's personal taste is another matter, particularly as he disapproved of its most significant venture, *Čisla*. In this way Struve re-examines Chodasevič's claim that the younger generation found no support in the older:

Несправедливыми покажутся упреки Ходасевича старшему поколению писателей, если мы припоминаем также приведенные выше слова Терапиано о значении, которое имели для молодого поколения воскресенья Мережковских и вечера „Зеленой Лампы“. Но дело в том, что тут влияние шло по линии, которая была не до душе Ходасевичу.⁴⁷

In his review of *Čisla* Struve emphasises its aesthetic aspect, its quality of paper and type, its interest in contemporary visual arts and music, both Russian and non-Russian, and the absence of political preoccupations. The primary significance of *Čisla*, however, was the opportunity it gave to the younger generation to express itself entirely after its own fashion, allowing for some contribution from the older generation, notably Gippius. Struve recall its reception among the émigrés:

Числа вызвали много откликов, как приветственных, так и поносительных. О них писали, им посвящали собрания не только в Париже, но и в Праге, в Таллине, в Шанхае и Харбине. Приветствовали их по преимуществу как „молодое“ начинание, открывающее дорогу молодым. Обрушивались на них за их „упадочничество“, за их „снобизм“, за их „аполитичность“, за „распущенность“ их прозы. Кое-что в этих упреках было справедливо. Но едва ли правильно было говорить о каком-то едином литературном лице *Чисел*, как говорили и друзья и недруги их. Было в *Числах* много такого, что отличало их от *Современных Записок*, и от *Воли России*, но это были признаки скорее отрицательные.⁴⁸

Struve's remarks on the lack in *Čisla* of a unified literary or critical programme allow him the chance to deny the existence of a unified Parisian aesthetic which the journal was supposed to reflect:

Не было в *Числах* и единства критических высказываний. Какое-то общее „направление“ лишь смутно намечалось у некоторых авторов. Так, критики *Чисел* в общем сходились в отталкивании от творчества Набокова-Сирина, которое они находили пустым и некимным. Но в то время, как более молодые — Терапиано и Варшавский — признавали при этом блестящее дарование Сирина, Георгий Иванов объявил его пошляком и „самозванцем“, а Зинаида Гиппиус — писателем „посредственным“. Оглядываясь назад, принято говорить о *Числах*, как о наиболее законченном выражении так называемой „парижской ноты“ в поэзии. Но такой

единой парижской ноты в природе не было, и Числа одинаково охотно печатали столь различных парижских поэтов как Ладинский и Поплавский, как Раевский и Мамченко, как Терапиано и Червинская и Штейгер и Кнут. Но верно, что и в отделе стихов и в критике (как в „Комментариях“ Адамовича, так и в критических заметках молодых сотрудников) сильно пробивался этот „парижский голос“ (один из хора парижских голосов), из-за которого и возник упомянутый выше спор между Адамовичем и Ходасевичем.⁴⁹

As it is clear, however, Struve is not very convincing on this point and seems unwilling to see the advantage of considering first what the various contributors to *Čisla* had in common before making distinctions. He will return to them in the chapter devoted to poetry with the same equivocality.

The next section of this chapter is devoted to “Polemika Adamoviča i Chodaseviča o poëzii” the essentials of which are by now familiar to us. In this case Struve sides with Chodasevič and quotes from Nabokov’s article on Chodasevič written after his death: “samye pury sanglots vse že nuždajutsja v soveršennom znanii pravil stichosloženija, jazyka, ravnovesija slov...”⁵⁰ as a statement of Chodasevič’s position. He then goes on to say that despite all of Adamovič’s influence this was not entirely lost on the Paris poets:

В конечном счете правота в этом споре была на стороне Ходасевича, из чего вовсе не следует, что стихи, которые защищал Адамович, не были поэзией; их предельная простота, „беззащитность“ и безыскусственность, на которые напирал Адамович, часто были лишь видимыми, напускными.⁵¹

This is rather an important point as it confirms the opinion of at least one member of the Paris School, namely Terapiano, that for all their indebtedness to the older generation the young poets of Paris created an aesthetic which did respect the demands of technique and form as much as it was concerned with thoughts and emotions.

At the beginning of this résumé of the Adamovič-Chodasevič polemics Struve states that Adamovič believed that modern poetry was obliged to reflect the crisis of world culture and the disintegration of personality without any regard for “masterstvo” which was now obsolete. In a following section “spor o molodoj èmigrantskoj literature”⁵² Struve shows how this concern over the relation between the difficulties of émigré literature and the rest of European culture pervaded the criticism of the thirties. Unfortunately, however, the émigrés tended to blame themselves for their inability to produce a “great”

work or author who would justify them and for those disintegrating elements which only a few like Adamovič seemed to welcome. Considering their relative isolation from non-émigré circles to be the cause of their "bol'naja literatura", as Vladimir Varšavskij called it, they insisted it was time to be more open to contemporary non-Russian influences without realising that in many ways it was precisely this other world which had led them into an impasse and had little to offer that was any less "bol'noe". Struve notes how despite the awareness of most of the critics of developments in Western European literature few made a connection between them and what they saw as the unsatisfactory state of their own literature:

Некоторые из молодых эмигрантских писателей, особенно парижских, несомненно подпали, как будет видно дальше, под влияние новейшей западно-европейской литературы (у отдельных писателей можно проследить влияние Пруста, Джойса, Кафки, Селина, Мальро). Станным поэтому кажется, что во всех разговорах о бытии и смысле эмигрантской литературы (в частности в выше цитированной статье Варшавского) специфически-эмигрантские причины кризиса этой литературы так усиленно подчеркивались за счет тех общих для европейской литературы явлений, которые свидетельствовали о переживаемой ею глубоким кризисе. Странно тем более, что как раз в эти годы один из самых тонких зарубежных критиков, В. В. Вейдле, выпустил замечательную книгу о кризисе современного искусства, в том числе литературы (и в частности романа).⁵³ (The reference here is to Vejdle's *Umiranje iskusstva*, 1937)

In his final general remarks on the period Struve explains that if the émigrés had reacted with some uncertainty to the crisis of culture in Western Europe at this time, then the political crisis of the late thirties threw them into total confusion. In order to understand the various dilemmas facing them and the way sentiments and sympathies changed just before, during and after the war Struve maintains it is necessary to look at the works of such journalists as Fedotov rather than at fiction or poetry which could not respond rapidly enough to the complexities of world events.⁵⁴ In any case, despite a certain hope before the war that a German victory might bring the downfall of the Soviet régime Struve confirms that the majority of émigrés sided with France when war was declared, and especially when they witnessed the suppression of Russian cultural and intellectual life in Paris after 1940. Struve also remarks that most of the émigrés resisted in the same way the propaganda of the pro-Soviet groups such as the "Sojuz vozvraščencev".⁵⁵

In chapter four of part two Struve considers the careers of individual poets, but, as we have seen, because of the thematic and geographic

scope of his book he cannot provide more than names, titles of publications and general characteristics of the poets in question. The most important feature of the poetry of the period from 1925 to 1939 is that it took precedence over prose work and was dominated by the younger and "middle" generation who quickly replaced in Paris the older poets such as Gippius and Chodasevič. For the purpose of ascertaining Struve's opinion of the phenomenon as a whole we will confine ourselves to the essentials of his presentation.

First of all he states that the three poets of the "middle" generation, Adamovič, Georgij Ivanov and Nikolaj Ocu, who had in their youth been associated with Gumilev, turned away from Acmeism in Paris. For Struve the simplicity of Adamovič becomes the search for "nebytie" and "nigilističeskij ėpataž" in Ivanov.⁵⁶ As for Ocu, Struve considers his most important work *Dnevnik v stichach* which was published after this period in 1950 with its more than 12,000 lines to be virtually unreadable. In any case Struve sets them apart from the main body of Paris poets none of whom had published before emigrating.

As he did earlier Struve manages both to deny that there were separate schools of poetry and at the same time to imply that there was something resembling one in each of the centres of emigration:

Говоря о поэтах эмигрантского призыва... всего удобнее сгруппировать их географически и говорить о поэтах парижских, пражских, дальневосточных и т.д. Это не значит, что существовала какая единая „парижская школа“, как думают некоторые теперь. Но во всех центрах русского рассеяния была какая-то общая литературная жизнь, и были некоторые признаки, объединявшие, всех (или большинство) парижских поэтов.⁵⁷

After noting that despite all the difficulties of émigré literary life one can name at least twenty poets who are worthy of recognition, Struve again attacks the question of a Paris School and this time seems to solve it by saying there were several groups and individuals outside groups who managed to appear at least in the same journal:

О какой-либо единой парижской школе, повторяем, говорить нельзя. Разнообразие было достаточно. Существовало в Париже несколько литературных группировок, были и поэты, стоявшие вне всяких группировок. Настоящей литературной вражды между группировками не было. Когда в начале 30-х годов возникли *Числа*, в них приняли участие почти все парижские поэты младшего поколения... а также большая часть старших поэтов. И все же молодых парижских поэтов можно разделить на тех, кто ориентировался на Ходасевича, призывавшего поэтов „писать хорошие стихи“; тех, кто находился под влиянием Адамовича, проповедовавшего „простоту“ и „человечность“; и тех, кто тяготил скорее к Цветаевой и

Пастернаку, что проявлялось главным образом в интересе к формальным экспериментам (этих иногда называли — скорее недоброжелательно — „формистами“).⁵⁸

We shall soon see, however, how quickly these divisions break down, as not only did many of the groups overlap as Struve admits, but also in the course of their careers the poets themselves changed direction. Thus we are told, for example, that the group around Chodasevič “Perekrestok” cultivated neo-classicism and strict form and included in Paris Jurij Terapiano, Vladimir Smolenskij, Georgij Raevskij, Dovid Knut and Jurij Mandel’shtam. At the same time, however, we are told that such poets as Antonin Ladinskij and Vadim Andreev who belonged to the experimental group “Kočev’e”: “vo mnogom bolee blizkie k Perekrestku”.⁵⁹ More significant is the treatment given to Štejger. On the one hand he is mentioned with Lidija Červinskaja as one of the chief followers of Adamovič’s “zavet”, yet on the other we are told after a rather devastating critique of Červinskaja’s verse that in fact he possessed a high degree of “masterstvo” and had developed a uniquely personal style. His poetry is compared favourably to that of Achmatova, Chodasevič and Kuzmin, which takes us a long way from Adamovič’s anti-poetics.⁶⁰ Such instances could be multiplied and in the end we have no clearer a picture of the period than when we began.

If Gleb Struve is authoritative in terms of basic information and provides a convenient outline for the period 1920-1940 then Vladimir Varšavskij in his book *Nezamečennoe pokolenie*, which was published shortly before *Russkaja literatura v izgnanii*, offers a thorough social and psychological interpretation of the younger generation as a whole.⁶¹ As a novelist who belonged to this generation Varšavskij was particularly concerned with portraying the difficult relations between the “fathers” and “children” in exile. Although much of what he documents does not relate directly to the poetry of the Paris School he does devote a chapter to Montparnasse (ch.4).⁶² In the preceding chapters Varšavskij describes in great detail the development of political ideologies among the young émigrés, which were characterised by a naive reaction against what they considered to be the betrayal of Russia by the liberal and radical left.⁶³ Although most of the journals and newspapers in Paris were in the hands of former Social Democrats, Socialist Revolutionaries and Cadets, in terms of the emigration as a whole they were in the minority. As they were the most educated and eloquent of the émigrés it is easy to forget that the majority of their fellow exiles viewed them with hostility and

contempt.⁶⁴ Based on a strange combination, in various forms, of Russian nationalism, monarchism, Orthodoxy and xenophobia the political movements of the young could flourish only in exile where they had no practical application. Deriving from the nineteenth century tradition of Slavophile disdain for European legalism and bourgeois democracy they also offered an explanation of the Revolution and a means of criticising the economic and social crisis of Europe in the 1920's and 30's.⁶⁵ On a higher level Varšavskij shows how many ex-intellectuals were influenced by such ideas and then gave them some kind of respectability. Berdjaev, in particular, with his doctrine of "Novoe srednevekov'e" is considered typical of this trend, which in the end could justify both Fascism and National Bolshevism, on the grounds of their being "organic" popular movements.⁶⁶ What is more important for Varšavskij, however, is not to show the various delusions of the young émigrés but the fact that behind them there was a certain Quixotic heroism and a genuine desire to find some solution to the disasters of Revolution and exile.⁶⁷ That there was very little sympathy for Fascism is demonstrated by the number of Russians who, although formerly involved in right-wing politics, joined the French army when war was declared or who worked with the Resistance during the occupation.⁶⁸

Convinced of the basic, if misguided, good intentions of the young Russians whose bitter experience of the civil war, lack of education and desperate circumstances in emigration must always be taken into account, Varšavskij also wishes to document the more positive manifestations of their enthusiasm for the implementation of the "Russkaja ideja". One of these was the revival of Orthodoxy among the young. As the only Russian institution to survive the Revolution the Orthodox Church also formed a link between the generation.⁶⁹ Inevitably political divisions made themselves felt as well as purely philosophical ones, and Varšavskij makes distinctions between the groups, some of which demanded a complete return to tradition and authority while others headed by many of the formerly non-religious intellectuals, insisted Orthodoxy must address itself to the problems of the modern world.⁷⁰ In both cases, however, there was again a certain disdain for European civilisation which identified all forms of Western progress with atheism and materialism. As a corrective to these tendencies Varšavskij stresses the rôle played by such people as Fedotov and Fondaminskij in exposing the dangers of messianic nationalism and anti-democratic ideologies, while remaining loyal to a Christian and Russian idealism, as expounded, for example by Solov'ev.⁷¹

Montparnasse, however, represents for Varšavskij an equal, if not greater, expression of a Russian idea of spiritual and cultural freedom. He begins his remarks by criticising the various debates about the possibility of literature in exile when there was in fact a great deal being written.⁷² In other words the older generation had already made up its mind to ignore the creation of the young, with the exception of such people as Chodasevič and Gippius.⁷³ As a prose writer much of Varšavskij's indignation is directed against the lack of space given in the émigré press to long works of fiction or extended essays, but more importantly he quotes extensively from his fellow novelists both to give them credit as well as to illustrate his depiction of émigré life. In general though, what he says about Montparnasse refers as much to poetry as to prose. If, as we have seen, the older generation of intellectuals was alienated from the mass of émigrés then the younger ones were no less alienated from them as well as the others. On the one hand they had no ability or desire to write nostalgically about old Russia and on the other they were considered by the older liberal intelligentsia to be "ne k dvoru":

Вечные шестидесятники узнавали в поэзии монпарнасских „огарочников“ все отвратительные им черты декадентства: мистицизм, манерность, аморализм, антисоциальность, отсутствие здорового реализма и т.д.⁷⁴

At the same time Varšavskij emphasises that they had very little to do with the French; for example, a poet like Poplavskij owed much to the "poètes maudits" but:

...Ни с одним современным французским литератором Поплавский не был знаком, вообще не имел никаких французских знакомых, не был вхож ни в какой французский круг. Он был, прежде всего, поэт эмигрантский, не парижский, а русско-монпарнасский. Когда он говорит: „не Россия, и не Франция, а Париж“, нужно помнить, что его Париж — это Монпарнас...⁷⁵

Although he paints a rather gloomy picture of the literary life of Montparnasse Varšavskij admits that it did receive encouragement from the "middle" generation who sponsored, in particular, *Čisla*. Describing the guiding principle of this journal Varšavskij does not present anything new and seems content to quote from Fedotov's article of 1942 to the effect that Adamovič's "humanitarian" aesthetic governed the Paris School as well as *Čisla* despite the fact that most critics saw in it a revival of "Petersburg" poetics and accused it of decadence.⁷⁶ In any event, Varšavskij considers that thanks to continual appearances in journals, newspapers and anthologies most of the Paris poets did receive the recognition they deserved, unlike the prose writers.

Just as earlier in this chapter Varšavskij places the émigré poets in the broader context of Russian history quoting Chodasevič's belief that: "v izvestnom smysle istoriju ruskoj literatury možno nazvat' istoriej uničtoženija russkich pisatelej", so too he diagnoses the state of mind of Montparnasse as a condition from which anyone might suffer if in similar circumstances, with the exception that this was on a massive scale. Referring to Pascal and modern existentialism he explains it thus:

Это не страх страданий, утрат, умирания, чего-то определенного, „предметного“, на чем можно сосредоточиться, а невыразимый словами и понятиями ужас перед темной угрозой бессмысленности и небытия. Словно учувшись, человек видит необъяснимость и странность всего окружающего, странность самого факта своего существования именно в данном месте, и со страхом чувствует, что на самом деле он не знает, где он находится и кто он сам, и ему кажется тогда, что жизнь проходит как чужой, непонятно кому снявшийся сон.

Заботы, страх, личные и общественные дела, ненависть, любовь, „погоня за зайцем“ — обычно настолько занимают людей, что многие никогда не испытывали этого страшного пробуждения. Но если человек, даже самый здравомыслящий, почему-либо, — например, в одиночной камере — перестает в достаточной мере участвовать в социальной реальности, к которой он был приспособлен, или если, как революции, привычные формы этой реальности разрушаются и меняются, им овладевает незнакомая ему прежде и тем более устрашающая тоска. В таком положении оказалась русская эмиграция.⁷⁷

As we have seen the émigrés had various means for coping with this Angst; the older ones could retreat into their memories, and the younger ones could turn to politics or traditional Orthodox observance. The poets of Montparnasse preferred at all costs to preserve their independence and if they were religious they devoted themselves to mysticism. Taking Poplavskij as the best example of Montparnasse, Varšavskij records his almost complete divorce from reality and his desperate search for spiritual illumination. Quoting from stories by Gajto Gazdanov, K. Geršel'man and Janovskij he maintains that even at the price of great suffering many of these young writers did attain the "dar liričeskogo vizionerstva"⁷⁸ and can communicate to us their discovery that beyond the loss of apparent reality is a deeper immutable reality:

Основная интуиция Гершельмана, это не вера в будущую, после смерти, вечную жизнь, а ощущение пребывания в вечной жизни уже сейчас, как в каком-то особом измерении данной нам действительности: „мы уже теперь погружены в венчающее мир бессмертие, как будем в него погружены в день воскресенья мертвых.“⁷⁹

Such themes of intuitions of the eternal and mystical re-birth did not meet with the approval of such critics as Miljukov who saw in them only neuroticism and a continuation of the "decadence" of the Symbolists and recommended a return to "zdorovoj realizm", which he considered had always been the tradition of Russian literature and which had now been revived in Soviet Russia.⁸⁰ For Varšavskij it is precisely this spiritual restlessness which forms the impulse of human history, without which culture would stagnate. More importantly, this self-concentration reveals the unity and absolute value of a human personality, which becomes one of the main themes of the younger generation's literature and which, with all its faults, makes it superior to the artificial and inhuman literature of Socialist Realism.⁸¹ Furthermore, this attachment to individualism allied Montparnasse with the other democratic elements of the emigration, though not always successfully. In chapter five Varšavskij describes in detail this development, particularly, the attempts by Fedotov and Fondaminskij to integrate the personal freedom of Montparnasse with their idea of political and social freedom.

Although Terapiano's article of 1959 "Sorokaletie ruskoj zaru-bežnoj poëzii"⁸² repeats the essentials of his earlier treatment of the subject in *Vstreči* it will be necessary to look at them again in the form they took in 1959, as they seem to be a response to other interpretations of the Paris School which had been made in the interim. The two which are in the sharpest contrast to his way of thinking appeared together in 1958, even though the main article by Vladimir Markov "O bol'soj forme"⁸³ is itself severely criticised by Nina Berberova in the "discussion" which follows it.⁸⁴ Although not concerned directly with the Paris School Markov uses it as an example of what he thinks is the end of lyric poetry. His basic message is that it is time contemporary Russian poets returned to the long form "poëma". As a member of the second emigration Markov is aware that many of the new émigrés have attacked the poetry of the first emigration rather crudely, accusing it of a lack of "bodrost'", an "uchod ot dejstvitel'nosti" and "pessimism".⁸⁵ However, he sees behind this a correct intuition which none of the Paris poets acknowledge. He maintains that the Paris Note offered nothing new, but was rather a cross between Symbolism and Acmeism, a Silver Age après the Silver Age, which explains its rejection of both long forms and Futurism. In defending the long form he says that all great poets have tried to write long poems particularly as they matured, and that there is an intrinsic greatness of theme and spirit in the long poem which is not possible in the lyric: "v maloju forme i nel'zja ne nyt'".⁸⁶ Even

more reprehensible in the lyric of the Silver Age was its extreme individualism: "V načale dvadcatogo veka svjazi s obščestvom u poetov počti poterjalis", poëzija tjanulas' k asocial'nosti, k individualizmu", which modern times have rejected.⁸⁷ He thus sees a return by the poet to the spheres of social responsibility and global interests.

In her "Po povodu stat'i Vladimir Markova 'O bol'shoj forme'" Nina Berberova raises various objections to this view of the lyric, pointing out that in hundreds of poems from Puškin to Majakovskij: "ne bylo nikakogo 'nyt'ja'" and that in most poets' careers long and short forms coexist.⁸⁸ She also defends the Silver Age by saying that in modern Russian poetry: "čto dejstvitel'no talantlivogo — ne obchodit ni simvolizma, ni akmeizma."⁸⁹ More revealing are her remarks on the Paris Note:

Вот уже много лет я слышу и читаю о „парижской ноте“, и не понимаю, что это значит, между тем, я прожила в Париже с 1924 по 1950 год и должна была бы понять, что это такое. Чувствую смутно, что в этом выражении есть даже какой-то комплимент: все-таки нота *парижская*, на какая-нибудь „тарасконская“ или „калуцкая“, и все-таки не могу догадаться, кто из поэтов ей принадлежит? Были в Париже поэты: Н. Оцуп, Д. Кнут, А. Ладинский, А. Гингер, В. Смоленский, А. Присманова, В. Злобин, И. Одоевцева, Г. Кузнецова, Г. Раевский, Б. Поплавский, А. Штейгер и многие другие (называю только тех, кто не печатался до 1914 года). Из всех них в Б. Поплавском была какая-то „нота“ Парижа 1925 года, которую он, благодаря своему таланту, сумел протянуть на десять лет и которая сейчас носит приятный отпечаток старомодности. По некоторым намекам в статьях о Штейгере, я понимаю, что в нем, больше чем в ком-либо, имеется эта „нота“, но тогда следовало бы называть эту ноту — „нотой Штейгра“. В остальных же, названных выше, я не вижу решительно общего, кроме, может быть, благородного, бескорыстного и несомненно талантливое ЭПИГОНСТВА (как было эпигонство в поэтах Пушкинской поры, живших одновременно с Пушкиным и частично переживших его). И пусть они останутся в русской литературе не как представители „ноты“, или даже нескольких „нот“, а как поколение, пришедшее на смену — не толокенному и не картанному веку.⁹⁰

Along with Markov's, this view could not be more thoroughly contrary to Terapiano's position. (First of all, however, we must note Berberova's eccentric dating of the younger generation which uses 1914 as the deciding factor. This is found nowhere else and is perhaps her way of accounting for the "middle" generation).

In one important respect Terapiano's article does differ from his general memoir of the period which we have already examined. In explaining the development of the Paris School he makes use of names

giving the various critics and poets specific rôles. Thus he now credits Chodasevič with the rejection of modernism which he also positively identifies with the legacy of Gumilev:

Мужественная смерть Н. Гумилева, расстрелянного в 1921 году по делу о Таганцевском заговоре, создала новый ореол вокруг возглавившегося им акмеизма.

Гумилева начали утверждать не только как поэта, но и как политическо-го борца-поэта... а его стиль — и вообще акмеистический стиль — сделались на время отличительным признаком зарубежной поэзии, как бы чертой, отделяющей то „прекрасное прошлое нашей культуры, которое мы унесли с собой в изгнание“, от „революционной свистопляски и всяческого безобразия“, процветающих „там“.

В первые годы эмиграции оппозиция левым течениям в поэзии (как до-революционным, например, футуризму, так и послереволюционным) являлась обязательной для зарубежных поэтических идеологов.

„Хаосу“ — формальной левизне, переходившей подчас в заумь и в явное издевательство над русским языком, противопоставлялся „Космос“ — неоклассицизм, связь с золотым веком русской поэзии и конечно, акмеистическая вешность и ясность.

Владислав Ходасевич в „Тяжелой лире“, вышедшей в 1923 году в Берлине, считавший себя „последним символистом“, был первым, кто открыто выступил за рубежом против „Хаоса“.⁹¹

He then states that, in fact, a similar process was occurring in Soviet Russia particularly in Pasternak's "Vtoroe roždenie". He also says that Cvetaeva's isolation was caused by her not following this trend:

Марина Цветаева, как верно заметил Борис Зайцев, эволюционировала в обратном направлении...

И то, что не только у большинства читателей, но также и у самой авторитетной зарубежной критики она не встретила глубокого отклика — было бы непрослительным грехом, если бы творческий воздух эмиграции оставался таким же, как в Петербурге и в Москве накануне революции.⁹²

As if in response to both Markov and Berberova, Terapiano insists on the inner unity of the Paris poets and the fact that they had created a new atmosphere of spiritual freedom which had never existed before among Russians and which would have been welcomed in contemporary Russia if it were possible.

Воскресные собрания у Мережковских, „Литературные беседы“ Георгия Адамовича... собрания в редакции журнала молодых — „Числа“... и выход в свет сборника стихов Георгия Иванова „Розы“ — явились той атмосферой, откуда вышло новое движение.

Было бы невозможно с точностью указать, какие именно разговоры Зинаиды Гиппиус с тем или иным из молодых поэтов, — или какой общий

разговор за воскресным чайным столом у Мережковских, или какая статья Георгия Адамовича и какой из его „Комментариев“ в *Числах* вдруг стали подобны катализирующему веществу, но катализация неожиданно произошла.

„Парижская нота“, как, тоже неожиданно, окрестил ее Борис Поплавский в одной своей статье в *Числах*, не стала „школой“ в обычном значении этого слова, т.е. объединением поэтов, имеющим какую-то определенную программу и общие формальные методы.

Она начала звучать в сердцах, сделалась внутренней музыкой в душе каждого.

Она ничего не утверждала в виде обычных декларации, которые всегда делают новые течения, и, конечно, не являлась какой-то панацеей, могущей — в глазах ее участников — вывести поэзию „из тупика“.

...И ничего не исправила,
Не помогла ничему,
Смутная, чудная музыка
Слышная только ему...

сказал Георгий Иванов в „Розах“ о Пушкине, но в сущности — о всякой поэзии, о каждом настоящем поэте.

Сущность поэзии, как всякого подлинного искусства, трагична, предел ее — вечно недостижим, берега ее усеяны обломками кораблей, потерпевших крушение...

Зарубежную поэзию некоторые обвиняли в пессимизме.

Но что такое пессимизм или оптимизм в поэзии?

Тема ее — с самой глубокой древности — Вавилон, Египет, Индия, Персия, Эллада и т.д. одна и та же: о любви, о жизни, о смерти, о Боге, о душе, о бессмертии; о безысходности „земного круга“ и о победе над смертью.

Тайна ее в том, что каждый новый поэт неповторимо-лично, неповторимо по-своему переживает эту тему в неповторимо-личной „форме“...

Для всего периода „парижской ноты“, для всей „парижской атмосферы“ чрезвычайно характерно *единство мироощущения*, соединенное с чрезвычайным *разнообразием формальной манеры* каждого из ее участников.

Сопоставляя стихи различных авторов, например, Антонина Ладинского с Ириной Одоевцевой, Владимира Смоленского с Анатолием Штейгером или с Лидией Червинской и т.д., видно, насколько они удалены друг от друга, в смысле стилистики и природы образа, и насколько они близки друг к другу, как только вопрос коснется мироощущения.

Значительность „парижского заговора“, соответствие его с духом века держится как раз на этой общности, на согласии друг другу противоположных.⁹³

The value of such remarks lies in their ability to draw us back to the true concerns of poetry and the study of literary problems. Terapiano is no enemy of discussion and criticism, nor is he as highhanded and vague

as Adamovič, rather he insists on recognising the fundamental characteristics of poetic creation before any other form of analysis is used. If Varšavskij, a novelist, could see his contemporaries as suffering on a vast scale from a loss of identity and social stability, Terapiano invites us to consider the poetry of his generation as a "conspiracy" to transcend the limits historical time and events had imposed on them, by entering into the realms of universal themes. By trying to capture the essence of the Paris School Terapiano manages to solve many of the questions of classification found in the other literature of the fifties. Perhaps because he was close to both Gippius and Chodasevič, Terapiano understands that the younger poets were able to decide for themselves the extent to which they would heed the directives of their different mentors. Thus, unlike Struve, or Berberova, who take a rather pragmatic approach to the problems of literary groups and circles, he can show how the overall unity of the Paris poets depended on a basic affinity rather than on formal similarities. Among the other post-war émigré (and nonémigré) critics of the Paris School only Jurij Ivask preserves such a commitment to the idealistic view of poetry expressed in Terapiano's essay.

CHAPTER III

THE REVIVAL (1966-1986)

From 1959 to the first edition of Nina Berberova's autobiography and memoirs in 1969 there is, with the possible exception of Simon Karlin-sky's life-and-works study of Cvetaeva (1966), virtually no significant literature on the Paris School or any of the émigré writers we are dealing with. Considering the present interest in the field of émigré culture it is important to recall the general indifference, if not hostility, to the history of the emigration which prevailed in the sixties. Perhaps motivated by the enthusiasm for the literature of the "Thaw" and the recovery of the works of the "Internal Emigrés", this neglect of émigré literature has attenuated the natural process of retrospective literary history and re-assessment. Thus, while some recent scholarship assumes a certain familiarity with the main features of émigré literature, from texts to historical background, other work tends to re-introduce the subject without specific reference to earlier studies or original material. It is hoped that the present work has been able in various ways to bridge some of the gaps between the different approaches to the study of the Paris School, without calling into question their individual validity.

The first category of literature reviving the 1920-1940 period which we will consider is memoirs. Aside from those articles and chapters from memoirs devoted to the writers who form the subject of this work, and which have been noted in this work when necessary, we can recommend the memoirs of Berberova, Šachovskaja, Odoevceva and Janovskij as providing fairly sympathetic introductions to the personalities and culture of the Paris emigration. Generally speaking, however, we have not used these memoirs as a point of reference for our research. This is partly on account of the nature of this genre and partly because of certain biases which each of the authors entertains. Although, with the exception of Janovskij, each of these memoirists wrote and published poetry, they all became better known as prose-writers, which is easily understood from these volumes. It is to them we owe descriptions of all the writers covered in this work, records of

conversations, explanations of the functioning of literary life and an evocation of the general "byt" of Russian Paris. At the same time we must beware of using these memoirs for understanding the inner development of the poetry of the period. Not only does the memoirist concentrate on the externals of life, but his conception of time is more horizontal than vertical. Where the poet aims to arrest time, elevating it to timelessness, the prosaist moves backwards and forwards along the lines of the narrative. From these memoirs we learn a great deal *around* the poetry we are studying, but very little about it. Even on the purely biographical and historical plane we must also admit some reservations.

In the case of Nina Berberova's *The Italics Are Mine* (1969, Russian editions, 1972, 1983) we recognise the traits of a writer belonging to the "middle" generation. Although aware of her youth in relation to the older writers she still possesses a certain selfassurance lacking in those who did not come to adulthood in Russia. Her early acquaintance with Gumilev and Belyj, her marriage to Chodasevič, their residence in Berlin and Sorrento with Gorkij, placed Berberova somewhat beyond the range of experience of Poplavskij or Štejger, for example. For Berberova, Paris was only one portion of her life and out of 625 pages only 200 are devoted to our period (pp.253-448).

Like Berberova, Zinaida Šachovskaja maintains in her memoirs, *Otraženija* (1975), a certain detachment from the Paris School, not only because she spent little time there before the war, but also because, by her own admission, she did not wish to become too involved in the literary politics there. For all her sympathies to individual writers whom she happened to know well, such as Anatolij Štejger, Šachovskaja does not try to analyse the poetics of the Paris School, beyond remarking that as far as she is concerned the interest in "Petersburg" culture as manifested in Montparnasse was affected and inappropriate. All the same the inclusion in her book of letters from a wide variety of correspondents does make Šachovskaja's memoirs an important source of original material not otherwise obtainable.

Although Irina Odoevceva, like Berberova, had participated in the literary life of post-Revolutionary Petersburg and was married to a major émigré poet, the tone of her memoirs, *Na beregach Seny* (1983) is rather different from that of Berberova. Remaining in Paris after the war and living there until her recent return to Russia, she preserved more than any other writer the continuity of Russian Paris.¹

From our point of view her most interesting chapter is on Merežkovskij and Gippius, for even though her own personality was not entirely suited to them, Odoevceva still appreciated their influence over her husband, Georgij Ivanov. This is a connection deserving further attention.

The most recent volume of memoirs, *Polja elisejskie* (1983) is by V.S. Janovskij, a short-story and novel writer, whose medical training provide him with a Chekhovian insight into certain aspects of his contemporaries. At the same time Janovskij has always been interested in esoteric philosophy and mysticism, which makes his chapter on Poplavskij particularly revealing. Like Varšavskij, Janovskij emphasises the idealism and originality of the younger generation, pointing out that the overall spirit of the period was formed by the meeting of the two generations:

Существует довольно распространенное мнение, что в парижскую эпоху на русскую эмиграцию влияли Бердяев, Федотов, Адамович... Это, конечно, верно; но не исчерпывает предмета. Ибо было и встречное, *наше* воздействие. Так что трудно оценить даже, кто на кого и как влиял. Я, например, думаю, что иные выступления Поплавского (и еще молодых) действовали гораздо чаще на Бердяева, Федотова и других „Властителей дум“ и вызывали творческий отклик.

В тридцатых годах в Париже артель мастеров укладывала сложнейшую и прекраснейшую мозаику; если угодно, собирали мед-все или многие, с одинаковым рвением! В этом ценность той эпохи; и только благодаря участию целой артели удалось добиться единства стиля, вкуса, красок, тона.²

It is this complex view of the whole which we have adopted and which it will be necessary to return to after all the other forms of research on the period have been tried.

The second category of literature, life-and-works biographies, is in some ways related to the first. Both trace a narrative, diachronic line along the events of an individual life. Although in the case of a writer's life interest is centred on his works, there are still some major problems with this approach. First, by selecting the life and work of one writer, one begins to judge the lives and works of others only according to the relation to the principal subject. When there is already a previous history of mutual antipathy between writers it is only too easy to take the side of one's "own" at the expense of the supposedly unsympathetic "other". This "divide et impera" partisanship is by no means over and we cannot doubt that in the study of émigré literature it has helped perpetuate among non-émigrés much of that pettiness

which has been traditionally held against émigrés. The uncritical adoption in recent years of Nabokov and Cvetaeva as exemplary émigré figures still serves as a pretext for dismissing the Paris School. (Fortunately the two serious biographies of Cvetaeva to date by Simon Karlinsky and Marija Razumovskaja avoid this tendency).

Our second reservation about critical biography relates to the difficulty of interpreting a literary work according to biographical information. This is especially hazardous in terms of lyric poetry, and although most critics accept in theory: "Lico poëta v poëzii maska"³, few actually follow it. This problem we discuss in more detail in the chapter on Poplavskij's poetry. In the end, of course, even the direct biographical approach is justified if it sends us back to the original texts with renewed interest, which is the case with Temira Pachmuss' *Zinaida Gippius: An Intellectual Profile* (1971) and David Bethea's *Khodasevich: His Life and Art* (1983), the only major works devoted to any of our poets.

Fully equal to her task, Temira Pachmuss takes on almost every aspect of Gippius' career. As with Chodasevič, a great deal of this information belongs to the pre-Revolutionary period of Gippius' life, but which is all the same essential for our understanding of her rôle in exile. Pachmuss is undoubtedly a convinced admirer of Gippius; but this in no way prevents her from placing Gippius in the context of her contemporaries. As Gippius has never been a popular writer we can only be grateful for Pachmuss' enthusiasm; without her efforts it seems unlikely that Gippius would ever have been properly rehabilitated.

David Bethea's work is of a somewhat different character. Concentrating more on biographical and textual details he attempts to interpret Chodasevič's poetry according to the poet's own criticism. Successful as this may be, it does not leave much room for a discussion of Chodasevič's years in Paris when he produced little poetry. While he does not enter into the debate about the poetry of the younger generation with any opinions which we have not found elsewhere, Bethea does underline the direct links between Chodasevič's poetry, his historical criticism and his views on contemporary Russian literature, identifying Chodasevič's feelings of displacement in Paris with Chodasevič's own conclusions about the aged Deržavin:

Thus, as Khodasevich came to describe the last years of Derzhavin and the inevitable decline that set in, his thoughts must have turned to himself. These final pages, I believe, are as close as the reader comes to an "explanation" of Khodasevich's silence as a poet. Like Derzhavin, Khodasevich had fallen out of touch with the epoch to which he had given his life.⁴

It is this unity of Chodasevič's poetic and critical careers which we have tried to develop in our chapter on his Puškin criticism.

Closer to our approach, is of course, the growing body of historical and literary criticism, which either assumes a knowledge of biographical information, or tries to dispense with it altogether. In general we can only welcome such studies, but again we must warn against a certain narrowness of vision which can exclude the influences of other writers or seek refuge in complicated critical apparatus. Hence our insistence on using contemporary criticism, which offers a solution to both tendencies. Among many of the monographs on the poetry of the older generation, which we have found illuminating, are those by Vejdle on Chodasevič⁶, Olga Matich on Gippius⁶, and Irina Agushi on Georgij Ivanov.⁷ Other such works of recent date on Poplavskij are examined later in our chapters on him.

Between 1972 and 1978 there appeared on several fronts new assaults on the subject of émigré literature in its entirety as well as in specific aspects. The most notable signs of this development are found in the collection of articles edited by Nikolaj Poltorackij, *Russkaja literatura v émigracii* (1972) and the transcripts from the colloquium "Odná ili dve russkich literatury?" held at the University of Geneva in 1978, with, interim, the articles by Roger Hagglund, "The Russian Emigré Debate of 1928 on Criticism" (1973) and "The Adamovich-Khodasevich Polemics" (1976); and G.S. Smith's "The Versification of Russian Emigré Poetry, 1920-1940"⁸ (1978). From basic bio-bibliographical information to metrical typologies this material would seem to promise more solid premises for understanding émigré literature than the more subjective interpretations we have looked at previously. Unfortunately, despite the ambitions of this work we are not persuaded that it has revealed much more of the inner forces of this literature than what we have learnt elsewhere.

The tone of *Russkaja literatura v émigracii* is decidedly conservative. For the most part repeating and adding to what we have already covered in the preceding chapter, most of the contributors belong themselves to the first emigration: Zajcev, Vejdle, Višnjak, Struve, Slonim et al. A variety of writers and poets are discussed, such as Merežkovskij, Vjačeslav Ivanov, Tëffi, Bunin and Cvetaeva; but as none of these articles is longer than twenty pages there is little room for complicated development. In the field of literary history Nikolaj Andreev follows the principles of Struve's work providing further descriptions of the various sub-divisions of émigré literature, in terms of genre and period. He also

stresses the difficulty of making conclusions about émigré literature as so much material has been destroyed or is inaccessible; an obvious point, perhaps, but one which needs to be repeated.⁹

Much as this work has been sustained by the ground work prepared by the efforts of many of the above-mentioned it has also been inspired by the omissions of others. While not wishing to enter into polemics we must not avoid mentioning those areas of conflict which might confuse further research. Insignificant as émigré literature might once have seemed its revival now poses several questions which had perhaps been considered long answered. Within its embrace, for example, émigré literature includes the history of the rise, decline and final re-emergence of Russian Formalism; from its beginnings with Belyj and Brjusov, the one time mentor of Chodasevič, to Roman Jakobson, N.S. Trubeckoj and the Prague Linguistic Circle and in recent times the arrival from the Soviet Union of representatives of neo-Formalism and Structuralism. While it is only natural that these new émigrés should re-adopt the tradition of their Formalist ancestors in the West, we cannot help noticing that turning to the literature of the Paris School they ignore the fact that in both its criticism and its poetics it was quite openly opposed to the Formalist movement. If one accepts that modern "scientific" methods of literary analysis have a monopoly on scholarship, then, of course, the literature of the Paris School can be seen as simply another collection of texts to be analysed. If, however, one believes in the intrinsically unscientific nature of literary creation one is bound to doubt the pretensions of systematic methodologies. In comparing the Poltorackij collection of 1972 with the papers delivered at the colloquium "Oдна или две русские литературы?" this conflict is not far from the surface; for not only is there the problem of the relation between émigré and Soviet Russian literature, and of the relations between the old and new émigrés, but also between Formalist and traditional literary criticism.

Before examining the papers presented at this colloquium we should mention the articles by Roger Hagglund and Gerald Smith which show that the divergences of critical approaches are by no means limited to the various generations of émigrés. Hagglund is a specialist on Adamovič and has recently compiled an annotated bibliography of his criticism, poetry and prose. His two articles "The Russian Emigré Debate on Criticism" (1973) and "The Adamovich-Khodasevich Polemics" (1976) flesh out for us the fundamental attitudes to literature which seemed to divide Paris in the late twenties and in the thirties.¹⁰ Without, however, supporting his arguments, which defend Adamovič with examples taken

from the poetry of the time, Hagglund has convinced us of the need to take this criticism seriously and to return to the week by week exchange of polemics by the critics. As we will see, Hagglund's interest in reviving Adamovič has not gone unnoticed.

If Hagglund represents at one extreme the defence of the most subjective of all forms of criticism, then Gerald Smith, at the other, the most objective. His work in metrical typology as applied to émigré poetry is undoubtedly one of the more striking developments in the recent study of émigré literature. Aside from the two articles mentioned he has also written an analysis of Chodasevič's poetry from 1921 to 1924 (selected from "Tjaželaja lira" and "Evropejskaja noč"): "Stanza, Rhythm and Stress Load in the Iambic Tetrameter of V.F. Khodasevich", (1980).¹¹ While we cannot help being impressed by Smith's mastery of this technique we regret that he has so far made no attempt to relate his understanding of versification to that of the poets in question. This would be especially useful in the case of Chodasevič where there is a large body of his theoretical writing available. Gippius, too, took a great interest in problems of versification; even when she was not writing much poetry, she still was active in helping the younger generation (e.g. her article "Kak pišutsja stichi", 1926).¹² We hope that in the future Professor Smith shall take into consideration the history of émigré views on versification and poetics as a means of discussing some of the features he has discovered statistically. Finally, we must note the fact that, whereas most metrical typologies are based on a well established and familiar canon of works, Smith's data is derived from a selection of poetry which is still virtually unread. Until such time as the émigré poets are widely known such studies will remain somewhat esoteric.

On the whole this is our most serious objection to the most recent research: insufficient regard for original sources and for the émigrés' self-characterization. Like the work of Smith the participants at the colloquium "Odná ili dve russkich literatury?" seem to assume a greater knowledge of the literature of the first emigration than one currently obtains. The issues raised here are, of course, valid ones, and we have found stimulating ideas throughout these papers. Unfortunately the scope of interests is too wide and the amount of space too short to allow for any one contributor to offer any real insight into the subject which concerns us, namely the unity of the Paris School. Despite the presence of Zinaida Šachovskaja and Nikolaj Andreev, who remind us, respectively, of the isolation of Soviet Russia from the rest of the world in the twenties and thirties, and (again) of the lack of material for the accurate study of the

literature of Prague, none of the participants seem to understand the importance of what one can call the mythology of emigration in forming this literature. At least three of the papers take Cvetaeva as an example of the overriding unity of émigré and Soviet literature. As we have often remarked, Cvetaeva is not an appropriate subject for such comparisons, as she did not wish to identify herself with the émigrés from the beginning. However, as her work and her ties with such non-émigrés as Pasternak, Majakovskij and Rilke are well known, it is obviously tempting to see in Cvetaeva a prototype of an émigré-Soviet synthesis. It is on this foundation that Lazar' Flejšman and Ėfim Ėtkind begin to draw parallels between, for example, Poplavskij and Pasternak¹³, or Chodasevič and Zabolockij¹⁴, as means of surmounting the émigré-Soviet division. Intriguing as such analyses may be, they beg the question of the nature of this division in its original context. As far as Ėtkind is concerned, it was purely political and artificial: "Važnee ponjat' samuju sut': russkaja poëzija XX veka iskusstvenno, vsledstvie političeskich katastrof, okazalas' raskolotoj nadvoe."¹⁵ That the isolation of the Paris poets from Soviet literature might have been deliberate and necessary for their creative development does not seem to have occurred to Ėtkind.

As the material included in this work indicates, from the criticism and poetry of both generations of the Paris School, the resistance and opposition to the Soviet régime, and everything associated with it, was as much metaphysical as political. From their understanding of the integrity of the human personality to their concepts of language and poetics the poets we have studied saw themselves as defending primarily, spiritual values, not only a "Russian tradition", against all forms of barbarism. It is not the purpose of this work to wage unnecessary polemics, but it does strike us as invidious that so little attention, not to say credit, is given on such occasions as this conference to the perceptions of these writers about their own position. Sadly, as Georges Nivat notes in his introduction, Vladimir Varšavskij died during the preparations for the colloquium, which he had been invited to attend. We can only speculate on what his reactions might have been to some of these papers.¹⁶

As final evidence, however, of the endurance of the underlying convictions of the first emigration we point to an exchange of letters between Jurij Ivask and Professor Ėtkind which took place in the pages of *Russkaja mysl'* a few months before Ivask's death in February 1986. In December 1985 Ivask wrote an article for *Russkaja mysl'* which was partly a review of Hagglund's recently published bibliography of

Adamovič's complete works and partly a memoir and defence of Adamovič as a critic. Ivask also took this as an opportunity to comment on the present state of literary research in America and the lack of appreciation on the part of the new émigrés for the legacy of the first emigration:

В Америке сильно развито мастерство литературоведения: не хватает тем для диссертаций. Кто-то вытащил из Леты барона Бромбеуса. Более интересная тема: Борис Садовский, поэт и критик. Во всех академических работах преобладает формализм или, как теперь чаще говорят, структурализм. Биография, историческая перспектива редко принимался во внимание. Это выхолощенное литературоведение! Но Хаггланд смело отверг все современные литературоведческие рассуждения. Единство у Адамовича помогло найти интуиция, помогло *оживление*, что считается ныне чем-то запрещенным... Формальный анализ необходим, не это мертвая вода, а нужна и живая вода интуиции.

Адамович скончался в начале 1972 года — уже тринадцать лет тому назад. Но для меня, и не только для меня, он остается живым и будит мысли. „Третья волна“ его почти полностью игнорирует, как и В.В. Вейдле, В.С. Варшавского.¹⁷

In his reply (29 December 1985) Ètkind remarks among other points that “Baron Brambeus” has long been rehabilitated and he refers to various works on him. As far as Ivask's opinion of Formalism is concerned and his claim that Adamovič, Vejdle and Varšavskij are unread, Ètkind has the following to say:

Читаем дальше: „Формальный анализ необходим, но это мертвая вода, а нужна и живая вода интуиции“. Это брюзгливое замечание перечеркивает развитие гуманитарных наук за столетие, — можно ли бездоказательно позволять себе такие наскоки?

Но лично меня особенно задело следующее утверждение: „Третья волна его (Адамовича) почти полностью игнорирует, как и В.В. Вейдле, В.С. Варшавского...“ В этой фразе я прочел ставшее нередким пренебрежение к „третьей волне“, с одной стороны, и к литературоведам новых поколений — с другой.¹⁸

Ètkind then goes on to describe how he in fact collected and published a series of articles by Vejdle (he does not mention Adamovič or Varšavskij) and how in his introduction to these articles he declared that Vejdle would return to Russia along with “...takimi teoretikami ruskogo poëtičeskogo slova, kak R. Jakobson, K. Taranovskij, V. Chodasevič, B. Unbegaun, D. Čiževskij, N. Trubeckoj.”¹⁹

By way of completing our survey of views relevant to the study of émigré literature we will quote from Ivask's rebuttal to Ètkind which ap-

peared with Ètkind's letter. For Ivask literary criticism is, in the end, more important, or at least more influential, than literary research or formal analysis. Aware as he is, as a literary historian, that Brambeus-Senkovsky has been studied, as a critic he still believes that this author has no influence on present-day literature. As a positive example of literary revival he cites O. Mandel'shtam's poem on Batjuškov as performing more of a service than all the scholarly efforts to date. The importance of Vejtle and Chodasevič, Ivask maintains, is not to be found in their academic work, as Ètkind implies, but in their criticism.

In his concluding paragraphs, however, Ivask addresses himself to a greater difference between himself and Ètkind, which takes us beyond the distinction between literary research and criticism:

А вот не придирика, а замечание по существу. В своей монументальной и несомненно полезной книге *материя стиха* Эткинд пишет: „Дух, как известно (курсив мой. — Ю.И.), существует, хотя творит его высоко-организованная материя“. Это марксистское суждение; и на Западе можно быть марксистом, но недопустима безапелляционность этой фразы: „как известно“. Далеко не всем это известно!

Отдаю должное эрудиции проф. Эткинда, но ему недостает широкой культурной ориентации. Так, он не учитывает, что в литературе и критике XX-го столетия, как в западной, так и в эмигрантской, продолжавшей традиции нашего т.н. предреволюционного „Серебряного века“, существенное значение имеет метафизика. Это относится и к советской поэзии: так, Бобышев и Бродский непонятны без понимания религиозных мотивов в их поэзии. Они эмигрировали, но это относится и ко многим оставшимся в Советском Союзе писателям. Религиозность, конечно, необязательна для ученых знатоков литературы, но они должны знать, что метафизика в наше время — существеннейший „литературный факт“. Незнание — непонимание этого факта представляется мне провинциальным, „отсталым“.²⁰

This review of literature about our subject is not, of course, exhaustive. It is meant only to indicate some of the approaches and attitudes taken over the years. If we have brought out some of their short-comings it is only because if gone unnoticed they might easily be quoted as authoritative in the future. We must also recognise that in the field of lyric poetry there is no satisfactory method of interpretation; where a historian can collect and analyse facts, the student of lyric verse must, after all the material has been assessed, allow himself a certain eclecticism and freedom, otherwise he will be grasping at air. Finally, as the Ivask-Ètkind correspondence reminds us, neither the Russian emigration, nor its literature, are „*causae finitae*“; which requires us to return with an open mind to their origins.

PART TWO

LITERARY CRITICISM OF THE TWENTIES AND THIRTIES

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Unlike the secondary literature of part One the material included here cannot be presented in strict chronological order. As Vasilij Janovskij maintains in his memoirs, the best way of approaching the literature of the Paris School is to conceive of it as a mosaic with influences moving between individual writers and between generation. Although the primary purpose of this part is to set a background for interpretations of the poetry of Poplavskij and Štejger, it is hoped that the significance of this criticism will also be understood for its own sake. Not only do we find in it the most accurate portrayal of the cultural climate of the period in question, but we also have a rich source of ideas and reflections on the meaning of poetry and the fate of Russian literature in the twentieth century.

Once again, in consideration of her central rôle in Paris, I begin with a description of Gippius' first efforts to organise the émigré intellectuals in Paris in the early twenties with the society "Zelenaja lampa" and end with the essays of one of Chodasevič's chief protégés, Jurij Mandel'stam in the late thirties. Along with extracts from the day-to-day criticism and book reviews of the time, which provide an outline of the developments between 1920 and 1940, I have also tried to bring out in the intervening chapters on Chodasevič's Puškin criticism and essay writing the more enduring elements of the criticism of the period. In these chapters the chronology is somewhat suspended as critics such as Gippius and Chodasevič often used a review of a recent publication as an occasion to air some of their more general principles about literary matters or to recall their previous lives in the Silver Age. In these cases the immediate becomes merged with the ultimate.

If nothing else, the material in these chapters should convince students of the Paris School that if the energies of the older generation did not manifest themselves in poetry at the time, they were nonetheless

put to equal use in the sphere of critical thinking and writing. No less important is the criticism of the young, for despite the patronizing remarks made about them, both at the time and in retrospect, we see here in such journals as *Čisla* their complete awareness of the issues of the day, and their own original attempts to deal with them.

CHAPTER I

GIPPIUS AND "ZELENAJA LAMPA"

Before examining Gippius' career in exile it might be useful to review some of her earlier ideas on literature and its relations with other spheres of culture, for not only will we recognise in her Paris years the continuity of her aesthetic but also the source of her sense of history. As one of the oldest of the older generation active in the emigration (she was born in 1869) Gippius had always maintained a conscious interest in the development of the Russian intelligentsia and had from an early age made the acquaintance of its leading representatives while pursuing her own independent career as poet, novelist and critic. It is this experience of the past which granted to Gippius a certain authority in later years and which allowed her to interpret, though not always accurately, the cultural life of the emigration in terms of a larger context.

Belonging as she did to the first generation of Symbolists, Gippius was directly involved in the first wave of reaction against the long-standing identification of the intelligentsia with positivism, utilitarianism and atheism. Inspired by the writings of Solov'ev, whom she knew personally, if not intimately, Gippius tried to bring about a *rapprochement* between intellectuals and some of the more liberal-minded leaders of the Orthodox church. The main expression of this was the Religious-Philosophical Society which met twenty-two times between 1901 and 1903. The long-term effects of this were of great significance for the development of Russian thought as a whole in the twentieth century, even if, as Gippius felt, its immediate success was limited. Ultimately it was this religious and social interest which isolated Gippius from her earlier allies in the struggle against the philistine positivists, that is, the circle of Diaghilev and *Mir iskusstva*. While sympathetic towards the desire of this group to create a new aesthetic movement in Russia, Gippius could not approve of their indifference to matters of religion and philosophy, which she considered to be the essence of decadence.¹ In her *Literaturnyj dnevnik* which covers the years 1899-1907 we find numerous articles devoted to these questions. In the preface to the book, written in 1908, Gippius describes how the journal

Novyj put' which accompanied the creation of the Religious-Philosophical Society was crushed by four forms of censorship. Aside from the pre-1905 civil and religious censors, Gippius (and Merežkovskij) had to contend with the established prejudices of the intelligentsia who accused them of "clericalism". Gippius explains:

В те недавние — и такие давние! — исторические времена вся литературная, вся интеллигентная, более или менее революционно-настроенная, часть общества крепко держалась, в своем сознании, устоев материализма. Одному Влад. Соловьеву позволялось говорить о Боге, при чем его никто не слушал. „Идеалистов“ еще не было на горизонте, декаденты жили скромными отщепенцами. Всякое слово мистики считалось безумием, а слово религии — предательством. Новый же Путь встал против материализма, и одной из задач его было — доказать, что „религия“ и „реакция“ еще не синонимы. Задача, в сущности, скромная; но при тогдашних условиях — почти невыполнимая.²

To this was added finally the "censorship" of the decadents whose only religion was aestheticism. Thus from a period well before the Revolution Gippius was on guard against any manifestations of opposition to idealism, whether in political thought or in art. As we are primarily concerned with literature we will concentrate on Gippius' continuing battle against aestheticism, although her political convictions, especially in exile, will never be wholly absent.

With the collapse of the Provisional Government and the failure of their efforts in Poland to persuade Pilsudski to intervene in Russia, the Merežkovskijs decided to settle definitively in Paris where they could continue their campaign against the Soviet régime. It was her particular background as an experienced member of the Petersburg intelligentsia in addition to her complete determination to oppose the Bolsheviks on all levels, whether political or cultural, which made Gippius a natural leader of the emigration. This motivation and sense of urgency animates and unifies all of Gippius' activities in exile, whether in writing or in her various attempts to organise the émigrés, and distinguishes her from many of her fellow exiles who for one reason or another were not so outspoken or committed to integrating literature with politics or metaphysics (Bunin, Chodasevič, Adamovič).

In her first year in Paris (1921) Gippius established a "Sojuz neprimirivosti" which sought to unite the ideals of the old Religious-Philosophical society with a categorical rejection of the Soviet régime in the name of human freedom and individuality. Estranged as Gippius was to become from many of the other leading émigrés, we can see that

in the very early period her views did reflect the general sentiments of such writers as Bunin whose speech of 1924 "Missija ruskoj ėmigracii" is as uncompromising as anything Gippius was to write.³

By 1924 Gippius had found that she was more successful as a critic and essayist than as a political activist and she devoted herself to analysing literature as the most accurate reflection of Russian life, whether in Russia or abroad. Some of her articles on the present state of Russian letters appeared at this time in *Sovremennye zapiski*, such as her "Literaturnaja zapis'" divided into "Polet v Evropu" (v.18) and "O molodych i srednich" (v.19) which exemplify her preoccupation with aesthetics, ethics and politics. As this is within the period of transition, she can comment on the recent past and the contemporary situation in Russia. She maintains, first of all, that literature simply does not exist any more in Russia: "Ustanovim poka pervoe dannoe: russkaja sovremennaja literatura (v lice glavnyh ee pisatelej) iz Rossii vyplesnuta v Evropu. Zdes' ee i nado iskat', esli o nej govorit'."⁴ In terms of individual creativity she says that this state of exile is not necessarily disastrous: "...vernee ceniš', jasnee vidiš'...i pisatelej, i svoi sobstvennye ošibki ... Za to vdvoe, vo sto raz dorože i cenee ispytanie vyderžavšij; tot, kto prodolžayet svoe delo na čužbine, bez rodiny, bez zemli, — počti bez tela; esli daže rany ego nezalečimy — tvorčestvo ego bessmertno..."⁵ The rest of this article is built on these two themes. Returning to the question of Soviet literature she admits that there is, of course, some writing being produced which hardly qualifies as "literature". Referring to the new generation of Soviet writers she says: "No ja choču govorit' ob iskusstve, ob ėstetike; iz jaic-že vylupilis' takie nepristojnye gady, čto nemestno mne ich na sej raz kasat'sja."⁶ In any case, as long as this literature is subservient to political considerations it must be judged "politically":

Неужели никому не приходило в голову, оставив в стороне всякую „политику“, все ужасы, разрушение, удушение, кровь (это тоже зовется „политикой“), взглянуть на происходящее в России и на советских повелителей только с эстетической точки зрения? Вне „правды и добра“ — исключительно под углом „красоты“?⁷

It is ethical sense which has prevented most of the émigré writers from creating anything over the past six years (1918-1924); when reality has exceeded imagination there can be no art. Only with the subsidence of chaos and the passage of time is it possible to write. For Gippius to act

otherwise would have been as much a betrayal of “chudožestvennaja čestnost’” as “celomudrie”⁸ she goes on to say:

Обычно писатель изменяющий целомудрию, наказан в самом творчестве своем: никогда еще не появилось художественного произведения о войне во время войны, или о революции во время революции... Но можно говорить о прошлом, к этому и приходят мало-по-малому русские писатели, оправляясь от пережитого: ведь они все таки писатели, и не даром же не погибли.⁹

After considering briefly some of the works of Bunin, Aldanov, Šmelev and Zajcev, Gippius ends “Polet v Evropu” with a sharp attack on Gorkij, who at this time was technically an émigré, but for whom the Catastrophe, according to Gippius, did not exist. She then states that the duty of the émigré who does realise the nature of the Catastrophe is to reveal it to Europe. As we know from the “Istorija intelligentskoj èmigracii” and her occasional publication in *Le Mercure de France* at this time, Gippius was still hoping to influence directly French circles. Unfortunately, her efforts were thwarted, however, not so much by the indifference of the French, as by their vague ideas of “l’âme russe” and their interest in Russian “èkzotika” which blinded them to the reality of post-Revolutionary Russia.

In the following article “O molodych i srednich” Gippius continues in the same vein, stating that although “Istina-Dobro-Krasota” form an indivisible “Absoljutnaja triada” she finds it easier to write on “Krasota”. Even so she says that since Beauty has been rejected in the name of Realism there is little post-Revolutionary literature worth mentioning. Significantly she makes an exception for two poets still writing in Russia, Achmatova and Vološin who have not lost their sense of “Prekrasnoe”: “Tam Anna Achmatova, žensvennaja, takaja, kazalos’, robkaja, slovno bylinka gnuščajas’ — i ne slomivščajas’, i smelaja v svoich poslednich stichach poprežnemu prekrasnych.”¹⁰ Her comments on Vološin are more equivocal. Along with the loss of the ability to distinguish between beauty and ugliness, and thus also the ability to create the beautiful, Gippius analyses another phenomenon of modern man and art which she believes Russian writers have developed to the highest degree. Although her remarks apply to Vološin directly we can see in them Gippius’ own determination to counteract the defeatism from which she and the rest of the émigrés suffered:

Что это, — фатализм? Высшая покорность? „Радость страдания“, доходящая до экстатической любви к терзателям, жертвенный порыв, мазохизм?

Пожалуй, „мазохизм“ — слово наиболее точное, но употреблять мы его будем не в осудительном смысле. Мазохизм, как я его беру, черта русского, по преимуществу, духа, и сама по себе еще не отрицательная.

Вот последняя книга М. Волошина — „Стихи“. Стихи прекрасные, и удивительно воплощают они дух героического мазохизма. Ни слепоты, ни закрывания глаз: с четкостью реалиста не „утопического“, а неающегося, дает Волошин образы Смерти, не боится никаких слов, описывая „бред разведок, ужас чрезвычайек“, находит чутко соответственные ритмы, отбрасывая рифму, где она ненужна.

.....

Возьмите книжку Волошина. Читайте внимательно, одно за другим, его искусные, разнообразно-построенные, стихотворения. Меняется ритм, но не звук голоса. Напряжение и жертва, — на каждой странице совершаемая и никогда не довершенная, — начинают раздражать. Мало-помалу с порыва, переведенного в дление, совлекаются красивые одежды. И соблазн кончен. В голой самодовлеющей жертве, в человеке, самоупоенно кидающемся в „пасть“, в отказе его то борьбы, т.е. жизни, мы уже ясно видим ложь. И делается странно, что нас могла влечь поверхностная красивость этих ритмичных воплощений.

Так разлагается, под чуть внимательным взором, мазохизм героический.¹¹

For Gippius suffering can be salutary only if it remains suffering in the writer's consciousness; to pretend it is a good in itself is unforgivable. As long as Russian writers of any generation understand this they will at least prove that they are alive: "V meru stradan'ja, ktoromu ne nachodjat blizkogo utešen'ja, — živj i oni."¹²

It is in the following year with Gippius' article "Nov'" (*Sovr. zap.* 23, 1925) that we see she has discovered her most important sphere of action, the cultivation of the younger generation in exile. Motivated by the realization that the downfall of the Bolsheviks was not at hand and impatient with her own generation, Gippius feels it her duty to do as much as she could to create an intellectual atmosphere for the young. In "Nov'" we gain an idea of the difficulties she faced and the background of her various projects. First of all Gippius considers the division of the emigration into "otcy i deti" to be an artificial simplification; without denying the differences between Russians born in different periods she points out that as each generation of fathers is itself made up of children and that the children eventually become fathers, one cannot assign any particular character to either "fathers" or "children", rather each succeeding generation will maintain its own characteristics for as long as it lasts, and which are formed in its youth. Because of this, Gippius is particularly concerned by the present condi-

tions of young Russians whether in Russia or abroad which could not be more unfavourable for their development. After stating that she will have to confine herself to the young of the emigration as there is no reliable information available on Soviet Russia, she gives credit to the émigrés in Czechoslovakia who were able to organise the means to educate the Russian youth there. Turning to the situation in France, she says it is virtually impossible to study the cultural development of the young: “Potomu što zdešnie studenty — ne učatsja; ni učit’sja, ni govorit’, ni dumat’ im nikogda: oni tol’ko rabotajut.”¹³ In terms of its chances for overcoming its obstacles Gippius stresses this generation’s internal division between those born c.1900 and those born c.1910; for it is the early period of exposure to Russian life which will ultimately be one of the most determining factors in their future:

Во все времена есть молодежь „старшая“ и „младшая“: 25-28 летние — не то, что 14-17 летние. Наши-же дни, — исторический российский прерыв, — усугубили разделение, создав еще одно, не маловажное, различие между старшими и младшими. Младшие... начали жизнь с катастрофы; у них нет конкретной связи с прошлым, за ними не стоит никакое собственное, биографическое прошлое в России. У всех старших это биографическое прошлое имеется, хотя и не в той, конечно, степени, как у старших эмигрантских групп, у „отцов“. А биографическое прошлое и связь с ним, в наше время, становится или кандалами — или лестницей, в зависимости от того, как к нему отнестись.¹⁴

If the past is not to be a shackle, then it must be analysed ruthlessly, a process which Gippius herself carried out throughout her years in exile and which inspired her to write such books as the biography of her husband and at this date (1925) *Živye lica* with its memoirs of Blok, Brjusov, Anna Vyrubova, Rozanov and Sologub among others.¹⁵ It is this personal experience of the past which allows Gippius to interpret the young people of the present. She sees in them a reaction, following the shock of the Revolution and Civil War, to the aestheticism and decadent individualism of the pre-Revolutionary era, which she points out had itself been a short-lived reaction after 1905 to all forms of social causes and political questions. Although she is sympathetic to the underlying feeling of disillusionment she cannot support the conclusions which some of the younger generation have come to. Referring to the account of a “kajuščijsja student”, the modern version of the repentant nobleman or repentant intellectual, who would like to reject not only his former decadence but also all ideas and ideals as illusions, Gippius states: “Poputnyj otkaz ot ‘idej’ ot ‘idealov’ (znakomyj otkaz!) —

ničego ne pomožet. I ja bojus', čto pravda o 'žizni' otkryvaetsja poka liš' v 'ideale', a ne v konkretnosti".¹⁶ If this disillusionment is strong amongst the "staršaja molodež'", how much stronger it must be amongst the "mladšaja molodež'" who have no Russian past unconnected with war and revolution and who have no means of expressing themselves in exile. For them the confusion is even greater and those figures of the Russian cultural past who have a distinct place in the memory of the older generation have all merged into one vague conception; as Gippius says, Dostoevskij, Michajlovskij and Miljukov are all contemporary and equally remote for them. Quoting from a letter of a seventeen-year-old whose vision of old Russia is based on Čechov's "Skučnaja istorija", Gippius remarks that much as the young might wish to believe in the importance of practical work and utilitarianism as the answer to the backwardness of Russia they will have to realise that such an ideal is meaningless without the ultimate ideal of freedom.

A direct result of Gippius' increasing interest in the young, whose state of exile was likely to be permanent, was the founding of the Merežkovskij Sunday salon where most of the émigré intellectuals, of whatever generation, were to make an appearance between 1925 and 1940. Although we have no immediate record of any of these gatherings, they were after all informal discussions, we can gain an idea of their importance for the young from the memoirs of such people as Terapiano, Janovskij and Odoevceva, who all agree that difficult as the Merežkovskijs could be, their ability to stimulate the minds of the young was unique. The more organised version of the Sunday salon, was the literary and philosophical society "Zelenaja lampa" which opened on 5 February 1927 and which lasted until the mid-thirties. As many of the speeches and discussions of the society were published in the short-lived journal *Novyj korabl'* (1927-1928) we can include them as part of the literature of the time.¹⁷ Although many émigrés of both generations were active in the organization of the society and the journal, such as Georgij Ivanov, Vladimir Zlobin, Nina Berberova and Terapiano we know that Gippius was the guiding spirit of these enterprises and we need look no further than the editorial preface to the first issue of *Novyj dom* (1926)¹⁸, which was the predecessor to *Novyj korabl'* to see her influence:

Пора литературе и критике вновь стать идейными, отбросив как нигилизм, так и эстетизм. На этих основаниях и строится „Новый Дом“.

Основанный молодыми силами, он зовет всех, кто хочет вернуться к подлинному искусству духа: в единении поколений возникает непрерывная преемственность идей.

Живя на чужбине и не забывая России, мы, однако, не тоскуем по ее „безрезкам“ и „ручейкам“. Она с нами, в нас самих, — поскольку ее язык, ее литература, ее культура навсегда унесены нами и живы в нас, где бы мы ни были. Но и Европа — старая сокровища мировой духовности, дорога нам.

Исповедуя оптимизм, как мировоззрение, оптимизм дающий „Новому Дому“ право на существование, мы счастливы в нынешних трудных условиях русской жизни делать пусть малое, но достойное дело.

На скрещение прошлого и будущего возникает настоящее. Направляясь к будущему, мы несем с собой из прошлого то, что нам кажется переходящим и ценным.¹⁹

Present here are some aspects of the Gippius aesthetic, but by no means all. In the three issues of this journal we have poetry of both generations, Gippius, Chodasevič, Adamovič, Ocup, G. Ivanov, Terapiano, some short stories and some criticism. Among the latter is an article by Gippius, „Propisi“ in which she again expresses her disapproval of aestheticism: „Slovom, poèzija stanovitsja vyššim kriteriem. Bog ne imejuščij pravo byt' Bogom, — idol. Idol poèzii tak-že protivnen, kak vsjakij drugoj.“²⁰ With the formation of „Zelenaja lampa“ and *Novyj korabl'* there seems to be more a revival of the tone of the Religious-Philosophical Society of the Merežkovskijs than of the Puškinian „Society the Green Lamp“, the ostensible precursor of „Zelenaja lampa“. Evidence of this is clearly visible in the foreword to the first issue of *Novyj korabl'*:

Слово, слишком часто повторяемое, — „новый“ — мало внушает доверия: привычка к старым колеям сильна. Но мы и не претендуем на новизну ab ovo „без роду, без племени“. Хотя мы не включаем себя и не включаемся ни в какие „установленные“ рубрики литературы („идеалисты“, „реалисты“, „символисты“, „нигилисты“, „эстеты“, просто и т.д.) не включаемся также в какие определенные группы эмиграции, — мы имеем свою родословную и историю русского духа и мысли. Гоголь, Достоевский, Лермонтов, Вл. Соловьев, — вот имена прошлым с которыми для нас, связывается будущее.

Несчастье нашей родины — наше несчастье. Но душа ее жива в нас, как во многих миллионах соотечественников, здесь и там. Наш корабль не боится открытого моря. Но мы поняли, что нельзя достичь родных берегов без ясной воли. А ясность воли рождается из ясного отношения к жизни, всестороннего и полного, к жизни в ее движениях. Выработать это отношение — есть первая задача наших дней.

Что такое жизнь? Она не искусство, не любовь, не наука, не политика, не философия. Она — все это вместе, в неразделимом единстве. Поэтому журнал наш будет свободно касаться всех областей жизни, везде ища одного, целостного на нее взгляда. Одним и тем же „нет“, одним и тем же „да“ мы будем стремиться отделять безобразие от красоты, злое от доброго, ложь от правды.

Для этого, — для трудного пути ночью, — всякому кораблю, и большому, и малому, как наш, нужно одно: нужно понимать язык звезд.²¹

Turning to the texts of the first two meetings of the society which appeared in the first issue of *Novyj korabl'* we can observe both the grounds for agreement between such émigré litterateurs as Gippius and Chodasevič as well as the sources of their later discord. Almost symbolically the two introductory speeches on the aims of the society were given by Chodasevič and Merežkovskij. In marked contrast to the religious-philosophical bias of the Gippius-Merežkovskij position Chodasevič, who had settled in Paris only in 1925, remains firmly within the bounds of literary history and strict regard for detail. For Chodasevič, "Zelenaja lampa" can mean only one thing: affirmation of the ideals of the circle of N.S. Vsevoložskij whose history he relates. Noting that Puškin could only have belonged to this group for a few years prior to his first exile in 1821 and that its rôle in the uprising of 1825 was modest, Chodasevič emphasises its importance as a centre of thought and as a source of inspiration for Puškin in exile. Including a reference to one of Puškin's poems which identifies a fashionable wine "vin de la comète de 1811" with the euphoria of the post-Napoleonic years in Russia Chodasevič ends his speech:

Роль „Зеленой Лампы“ бесконечно скромная, но все-таки, „Вино Кометы“ воодушевляло важные, роковые споры. Среди окружавшей тупости, умственной лени и душевного покоя — оно помогало беречь умы и оттачивать самое страшное, самое разительное оружие — мысль.²²

In subsequent chapters we will return to Chodasevič and the way in which his Puškinism and literary purism tended to isolate him from the general trend of the Paris School. At the moment we will note only that while Chodasevič always maintained a respect for Gippius and Merežkovskij in view of their common enemies, the Soviet régime and émigré apathy, his presence in "Zelenaja lampa" was anomalous and short-lived. In the second introductory speech by Merežkovskij we have a restatement of the Merežkovskij's programme for the society, which quickly returns us from the Russian Golden Age to the Silver:

Пламя нашей лампы сквозь зеленый абажур — вера сквозь зеленый цвет надежды: Вера в свободу, с надеждой что Свобода и Россия будет одно.

Это очень трудно понять. Многие еще, или уже не понимают: устали жертвовать своей плотью — духу, устали жертвовать Россией — свободой. Зараза усталости, обывательщины, очень сильна. Воздух наш напоен тончайшим ядом. Он затуманивает нас, мы теряем понемногу чистые

понятия свободы и родины. Быть может, „Зеленая Лампа“ следовало бы сделаться лабораторией, чтобы искать противоядий, оперируя с элементами химически-чистыми...²³

After this follows an incomplete text of M.O. Cetlin's speech "O literaturnoj kritike". Cetlin, who also wrote under the pseudonym Amari, was an editor of *Sovremennye zapiski* and contributed much criticism to various journals which can be considered typical of the older generation, without inciting controversy. His remarks on the relation between author and critic are entirely derived from the nineteenth century as he defends the idea that the critic's duty is to draw the artist into the spheres of politics and social questions and to serve as an intermediary between the artist and the public. Unoriginal as this may be, Cetlin does voice a disapproval of the formalists which will become standard for the Paris School:

Только в наши дни появилась школа критиков, отказывающаяся от всех духовных и волевых устремлений. Критики формалисты отбрасывают всякие „что“ и ставят один вопрос: „как это сделано?“ Они похожи на тех детей которые, чтобы посмотреть как сделана игрушка, ломают ее. Они уничтожают не только личность читателя, но и автора. Для них литература безличная эволюция приемов, в которой отдельные комплексы приемов для удобства носят имя „Пушкин“ или „Гоголь“.²⁴

With the second meeting of the society we hear, after so many preliminary remarks, Gippius' own voice in her address "Russkaja literatura v izgnanii".²⁵ Starting from Merežkovskij's idea of a laboratory, Gippius states that she would like to carry out research on the "duchovnoe sostojanie našej émigracii", but realises that this is too large a subject. Instead she will confine herself to the literature of the emigration which is now entering its tenth year and which she considers to be the most accurate reflection of émigré life. Here she notes that there is a complete lack of agreement as some maintain one can only speak of a process of anabiosis in exile. The only answer to negative criticism of émigré literature as a whole is to compare it with parallel developments in Soviet Russia. For Gippius the mere fact of the freedom available to Russian writers in exile will always mean that whatever its quality this literature is the only genuine Russian literature. At the same time she does admit that the emigration has its own forms of censorship, which even if it is not dictatorial does divide the émigrés into various groups with self-imposed "zakony", derived for the most part from pre-revolutionary party politics. As we know from other sources, Gippius' remarks on the "censorship" of the émigré press were inspired

more by her own feeling that she could not write and publish without constraint than by concern for the freedom of the press in general. Thus, while she argued that the young writers must be given a chance to appear in print, she immediately began to attack their efforts. On this occasion she examines the literary journal *Zveno* and warns that it is turning into an aesthetic journal à la *Apollon*, based on “čistejšij sub”ektivizm”. She says of the younger generation: “Oni protiv vsjakich ‘idej’ — ved’ ideja čto-to ‘obščee’ i daže uverjajut, čto vremja idej, filosofii, mysli, smysla — prošlo; starye idej provalilis’, a novych ne bude”.²⁶ She sees in this a reaction to the older generation’s preoccupations with social theories, as we noted before, but does not yet consider its results as successful. As we have also seen while Gippius’ attitude to her own as well as younger generation is extremely *exigeant*, many of her observations were accepted and incorporated by other émigré writers in their criticism. Thus her final statement will serve at least in part as a standard for the Paris School: “Èmigrantskaja literatura ne suščestvuet, poskol’ku na nej *vnutrenno* ne otryaetsja ni političeskaja russkaja katastrofa, ni opyt izgnanija”.²⁷

CHAPTER II

CHODASEVIČ AS PUŠKINIST

Turning to the literary criticism of Chodasevič, we realise how differently he perceived his position in exile from that adopted by Gippius. It would be a mistake, however, to exaggerate their various disagreements; not only did they recognise each other's intelligence and commitment to opposing the Sovietization of Russian culture, but they also occasionally indulged in mutual admiration of each other's work. We have only to read Gippius' letter to Chodasevič about his life of Deržavin¹ or Chodasevič's review of Gippius' memoirs *Zivye lica* to see how much they had in common.²

As was the case with Gippius, before we can begin to assess Chodasevič's specific contribution through his criticism to the literary life of Russian Paris, it is necessary to make a few general observations about Chodasevič's career as a poet and critic, both before and after emigration, and about the fate of his critical work. Ironically, despite the high regard in which specialists in émigré literature have always held Chodasevič's criticism, there are as yet no complete bibliographies of his uncollected articles, reviews and memoirs, whose number is estimated at between 300 (Nina Berberova) and 430 (Richard Sylvester). This is partly the result of the fact that much of his work only appeared in newspapers and was never collected or reprinted. (From 1927 to his death in 1937 Chodasevič was the literary editor for the newspaper *Vozroždenie*, for which he wrote almost weekly, as well as a contributor to the other Paris daily newspapers *Dni* and *Poslednie novosti*). For the purpose of this work we have made use of David Bethea's bibliography of Chodasevič's uncollected works which lists 130 items, and which along with the material available in the editions of selected works has made it possible to form a fairly accurate idea of Chodasevič as a critic and memoirist.³ We must also include as works of criticism his biography of Deržavin (1931)⁴ and his two books on Puškin (1924 and 1937).⁵

Although in Paris Chodasevič can be seen as the equal of Gippius as a leading light of the cultural emigration, we must not forget that in

Russia they belonged to two virtually distinct generations, Chodasevič being the younger by seventeen years. As he remarks in his autobiographical sketch "Mladenčestvo" (1933), he always felt slightly behind the times in which he lived, partly because of his late arrival in his family, (he was born in 1886 twenty-two years after his eldest brother and eleven after his sister), and partly because of his late arrival on the literary scene of fin de siècle Russia.⁶ Unlike Gippius, then, who was firmly rooted in the cultural milieu of the late nineteenth century, and who was a leading Symbolist, Chodasevič had to begin his career during the waning of the Silver Age. Much as this might have seemed a disadvantage at the time it granted him in exile a sense of perspective and detachment from the pettiness of émigré literary intrigue. More importantly, this isolation from the trends of the present was accompanied by a passionate devotion to the literature of Russia's past, both for its own sake and as a source of inspiration for his own poetry. In exile Chodasevič's vast knowledge of the past and his continued research into it would become a major occupation for him, making him a living memory for the rest of the emigration. As he was to write in 1926:

Мы — писатели, живем не своей только жизнью. Рассеянные по странам и временам, мы имеем и некую сверхличную биографию. События чужих жизней мы иногда вспоминаем, как события нашей собственной. История литературы есть история нашего рода; в известном, условном смысле — история каждого из нас.⁷

In 1908 Chodasevič wrote one of his first pieces of criticism, an article on Countess Rostopčina, which coincided with the publication of his first volume of poetry, *Molodost'*. Although he did write on contemporary poetry, both in Russia and in France, Berberova mentions an early article in which he reviewed volumes of poetry by Achmatova, Cvetaeva, Kuzmin, Bal'mont, Brjusov, Vjačeslav Ivanov and Kljuev⁸, his main achievement in criticism, even at this stage, was the recovery and interpretation of the literature of the historical past; to which in exile he would add his talent for memoirs of the recent past. Of the many articles devoted to such historical literary figures as Del'vig, Vjazemskij, Gogol', Tjutčev and Mickiewicz, the most revealing, both of their subject and author, are about Puškin.

As both Bethea and Berberova remind us, it is a mistake to see in Chodasevič's historicism a mere escape from the present, for in his relentless pursuit of the past he sought a means for understanding the present, and in the case of Puškin, a guide. Motivated at first, as Bethea

suggests, by disillusionment with Symbolism and the increasingly perverse Brjusov, Chodasevič found in Puškin not only the centre of the Russian Golden Age, but also the first professional man of letters in Russia. As Chodasevič's first volume of collected criticism shows (*Stat'i o russkoj poëzii*, SPb, 1922), his "Puškinian" ideal of poetry and criticism, which rested on belief in the importance of technique, the seriousness of the study of poetry, the independence of art from political and ideological constraints and loyalty to the Russian literary tradition, was well defined by the time of the Revolution and would only be strengthened by conflict with the prevailing trends of Soviet and émigré literature and literary criticism.

Stat'i o russkoj poëzii include the following chapters, with their date of composition: "Grafinja E.P. Rostopčina" (1908), "Deržavin" (1916), "Peterburgskie povesti Puškina" (1914), "O 'Gavriliade'" (1917), and "Koleblemyj trenožnik" (1921). The first studies unite Chodasevič's interest in the era of Puškin with his wish to render justice to forgotten talent and the inner spirit of a lost age. In regard to Deržavin this would lead to the full-length biography of 1931. Writing in 1916 Chodasevič comes to the defence of Deržavin's pseudo-classical conceits, which were germane to Chodasevič's own poetry at the time:

Нас заставляют раз навсегда запомнить, что творения певца Фелицы — классический пример русского лже-классицизма, т.е. чего-то по существу ложного, недолжного и неправого, чего-то такого, что слава Богу кончилось, истлело, стало „историей“ — и к чему никто уже не вернется.

Тут есть великая несправедливость. Назвали: лже-классицизм, и точно придавали могильным камнем из-под которого и не встанешь. Меж тем, в поэзии Державина бится и пенится родник творчества, глубоко волнующего, напряженного и живого, т.е. как раз не ложного. Поэзия Державина спаяна с жизнью прочнейшими узами.⁹

Furthermore, he sees in Deržavin a poet who stood in an active relation to the times in which he lived:

Всякая культурная деятельность, в том числе поэтическая, являлась *прямым* участием в созидании государства. Необходимо было не только вылепить внешние формы России, но и вдохнуть в них живой дух культуры. Державин — поэт был таким же непосредственным строителем России, как и Державин администратор. Поэтому можно сказать, что его стихи суть вовсе не *документ* эпохи, не *отразилось* в его стихах, а сами они в числе иных факторов, *создали* это время.¹⁰

For Chodasevič, Puškin, of course, represented the greatest expression of the poet's power to create the spirit of an era, which is the theme

of his article on Puškin's "Gavriliada": "Da, v načale XIX stoletija byl v Rossii moment, kogda veličajšij iz ee chudožnikov, ne 'stilizujas' i ne podražaja, a estestvenno i ne proizvol'no, edinstvenno v silu vnutrennej neobchodimosti, vozrodil samo Vozroždenie."¹¹

With the speech delivered at a Puškin evening in 1921 at the "Dom Literatorov" in Petersburg ("Koleblemyj trenožnik") we first hear the tragic voice of the mature Chodasevič, which he will carry into exile. Although he was only thirty-five at the time he speaks with the complete authority of one who belongs to a previous era, and who has taken upon himself the responsibility of maintaining a tradition and of interpreting it to the young. In this respect his attitude to contemporary Soviet youth is no different to the one he would later have for the younger generation of émigrés. By now Chodasevič's earlier Puškinism has become a philosophy of Russian history and culture as he identifies the fate of modern Russia with the knowledge and understanding of Puškin; to betray Puškin is to betray Russia. The intensity of this conviction will only grow with time and the more possessive Chodasevič will become of Puškin the more certain he will be that both émigrés and Soviets have committed this betrayal. Naturally, this speech does not contain all of Chodasevič's thoughts on the subject but we can find some of his basic ideas to be developed at length in Paris. The first of these is a statement of his belief in the equality of the form and content of an artistic creation, al-though in a given work one or the other might predominate. In Puškin's poetry and especially in his long narrative poems Chodasevič sees the perfection of this balance. Taking, appropriately for the occasion, "Mednyj vsadnik" as the best example of this, Chodasevič arrives at the main point of his speech that the more complex a work by Puškin the more open it is to misinterpretations which in the present circumstances are almost inevitable. As Puškin's Russia has vanished so has the possibility of understanding him immediately and naturally:

Если, как я уже говорил, лицо великого писателя неизбежно меняется в глазах сменяющихся поколений, то в наши дни, да еще по отношению к бесконечно многомысленному Пушкину, эта смена должна проявиться с особой силой. История наша сделала такой набросок, что между вчерашним и нынешним оказалась какая-то пустота, психологически болезненная, как раскрытая рана.¹²

.....

Можно бы рассказать великое множество прискорбных курьезов, доказывающих, что прямое, элементарное непонимание и незнание Пушкина есть явление, равно распространенное в молодой литературной среде, как и в среде читательской. Все это — следствие нарастающего невнимания

к Пушкину; возникает оно из того, что эпоха Пушкина — уже не наша эпоха, а писателем древности он еще не сделался, так что научное изучение Пушкина, какие бы огромные шаги оно ни сделало, составляют еще достояние немногих.¹³

Chodasevič then can accept the fact that Puškin now belongs to the “Otkrytoe more istorii” as long as his new critics are sufficiently trained. Unfortunately if in the past Puškin had been subjected to the crude materialism of Pisarev then now he was equally misunderstood by Chodasevič’s enemies, the Formalists:

Нельзя не указать тут же и на воскресшие в последнее время отсечение формы от содержания и проповедь главенства формы, подобно тому, как в пору первого затмения проповедывалось главенство содержания. И то, и другое одинаково враждебно всему духу пушкинской поэзии. Те, кто утверждает, что Пушкин велик виртуозностью своей формы, содержание его — вещь второстепенная, потому что вообще содержание в поэзии не имеет значения, — суть писаревцы наизнанку. Сами того не зная, они действуют, как клеветники и тайные враги Пушкина, выступающие под личиной друзей.¹⁴

Although Chodasevič will continue until his death to defend his concept of Puškin as the paragon of Russian literature and even though he tries to end his speech with some hope for the future restoration of Puškin, he cannot help admitting to a certain fatalism and pessimism which will often get the better of him in Paris:

И кто знает, что прочитают на нем грядущие люди, какие открытия они сделают в мире, созданном Пушкиным? Быть может, они разгадают то, чего мы не разгадали. Но многое из того, что видели и любили мы, они уже не увидят.

То, о чем я говорил, должно ошутиться многими, как жгучая тоска, как нечто жуткое, от чего, может быть хочется спрятаться. Может быть, и мне больно, и мне тоже хочется спрятаться, — но что делать? История вообще неуютна. „И от судеб защиты нет“.

Тот приподнятый интерес к поэту, который многими ощущался в последние годы, возникал, может быть, из предчувствия, из настоящей потребности: отчасти — разобраться в Пушкине, пока не поздно, пока не совсем утрачена связь с его временем, отчасти — страстным желанием еще раз ощутить его близость перед разлукой. И наше желание сделать день смерти Пушкина днем всенародного празднования, отчасти, мне думается, подсказано тем же предчувствием: это мы уславливаемся, каким именем нам аукаться, как нам переключаться в надвигающемся мраке.¹⁵

In order to gain a consistent view of Chodasevič’s Puškin criticism, we will follow it from these articles of 1922 through the twenties and

thirties without direct reference to his other articles, although when we discuss his memoirs and criticism of contemporary literature, certain underlying interests and preoccupations will reappear. Indeed, his next work is based on the subject of repetition in Puškin. Between June 1922, when he left Russia for ever, and November 1925 when he settled in Paris, Chodasevič led a peripatetic existence in Europe, visiting after a year in Berlin such cities as Prague, Marienbad, Rome, Turin, London, Belfast, Naples and Sorrento. Naturally these circumstances were not conducive to creativity and are reflected in the background of his major critical work of this period, *Poètičeskoe chozjajstvo Puškina* which was written in Saarow (Berlin) and Marienbad in 1923 and published without the author's permission in Leningrad in 1924. In 1937 Chodasevič published an emended version of this as his book *O Puškine*. Without entering into an analysis of these Puškin studies, we can, however, understand Chodasevič's own aesthetic by noting the general principles he derives from his special reading of Puškin.

Despite the pessimism of his "Koleblemyj trenožnik" Chodasevič's ability to resume his work on Puškin shows his determination to preserve the continuity of his own culture in exile. In the foreword to *Poètičeskoe chozjajstvo Puškina* he states that he had first begun work on the question of auto-reminiscences in 1914, but had not been able to continue for obvious reasons. He also apologises for the fact that cut off as he was from access to material and other Puškinists there will be certain errors in his work. Even so, the sixty chapters of this book cover in great detail a vast amount of Puškin literature and show either how much work Chodasevič had already done in Russia or else how diligent he was in the early days of his stay in Berlin. More importantly, these investigations reveal Chodasevič's methods for studying literature. If at times he relies almost entirely on biographical details, as is the case with his attempt to trace images of the declining year to the death of Amalija Riznič, then on other occasions he seems to approach a formalist analysis, especially in his discussion of Puškin's metrics. The central theme of this work is Puškin's economy and complete devotion to the craft of poetry, which for Chodasevič becomes the basis for the study of poetry as well. Just as the poet transforms the details of his every day life into material for artistic creation, so too does the critic follow behind the poet in his *atelier* trying to understand this process from within. Although beyond the scope of this analysis we must not forget that the same period saw the composition of Chodasevič's last collection of poetry "Evropejskaja noč"

(1923-1926, included in his *Sobranie stichov*, 1927) reminding us that Chodasevič the poet is still present in Chodasevič the critic.

Before his arrival in Paris Chodasevič contributed an article “O čtenii Puškina” to *Sovremennye zapiski* (v.20, 1924) to mark the one-hundred-twenty-fifth anniversary of Puškin’s birth. This, along with two more Puškin études in the same journal, “Glupovatost’ Poëzii” (SZ, v.30,1927) and “V sporach o Puškine” (SZ, v.37,1928), continues the same assiduous interpretation of Puškin according to analysis of certain key words and phrases which appear both in his poetry and correspondence. “O čtenii Puškina” discusses Puškin’s concept of inspiration and creativity. Taking as his point of departure four lines from Puškin’s “Čern”:

.....
Не для житейского волненья,
Не для корысти, не для битв,
Мы рождены для вдохновенья,
Для звуков сладких и молитв.

which he says applies to all poets, Chodasevič comments that as usual Puškin’s meaning is both extremely complex and extremely clear. In what he calls the “Puškinskaja formula” of “vdochnovenie”, “sladkie zvuki” and “molitvy” he says that one of the few terms Puškin tried to explain was “vdochnovenie”. Chodasevič then recalls Puškin’s opposition to the idea firmly rooted in society, criticism and literary histories that Inspiration is a form of ecstasy or intoxication into which a poet can fall and create effortlessly. Although he believed young poets and some gifted dilettanti could experience this, Puškin stated that they stand “...na nizkich stupenjach tvorčestva”. In Puškin’s vocabulary such a condition is not “vdochnovenie”, but “vostorg”. Chodasevič quotes Puškin’s distinction between the terms which in his day were becoming confused:

Восторг исключает *спокойствие* — необходимое условие *прекрасного*. Восторг не предполагает силы ума, располагающего частями в отношении к целому. Восторг непродолжителен, непостоянен, следовательно не в силах произвести истинное, великое совершенство.

.....
Вдохновение есть расположение души к живейшему принятию в печатлений и соображению понятий, следственно и объяснению оных.¹⁶

On the basis of these definitions and “Čern” Chodasevič constructs a theory of creativity which extends beyond the study of Puškin’s own

works and which shows us how profound the differences will be between Chodasevič and his fellow critics once he establishes himself in Paris.

The first stage of creation is inspiration, which consists of “prinjatje vpečatlenij” and “‘razborka’ ili ‘soobraženie ponjatij’” followed by a third process:

В следующей стадии эти „соображенные понятия“, т.е. рассортированные и сопоставленные впечатления, поступают в дальнейшую обработку: они подвергаются „объяснению“, т.е. философскому осмысливанию.¹⁷

After this the “soobražennye ponjatija” are sent to the “fabrika ‘sladkich zvukov’” for the second stage:

Здесь, под „сладкие звуки“ молотков, выковываются новые, еще небывалые в мире вещи: из накопленных впечатлений и объясненных понятий поэта созидаются здесь новые страны, растения, люди, царства, планеты, — новые миры здесь творятся поэтом.

Но материал, идущий на эти изделия, состоит из того, что добыто вдохновением, из впечатлений и объясненных понятий поэта. Кроме этого материала, нет ничего и взять неоткуда. Тот всех вдохновеннее, кто накопил всех больше.¹⁸

This passage is important to remember as it effectively underlines Chodasevič's disapproval of Symbolist claims to inspiration from another invisible world. This is not to say that Chodasevič did not consider the religious aspect of artistic creation; for him the poet is not so much a medium or theurgist working on behalf of mysterious forces as the conscious creator and pantocrator of his own microcosmos. The third stage is reached when the poet brings his new world into the old one:

Поэт выносит свое творение из мастерской гномов на свет Божий — и наступает минута сравнения и отчета. Поэт говорит (кому? — не все ли равно, как зовет он Того, с чьим творением сравнивает свое?): „Ты дал мне свой мир, загадочный, обманчивый, противоречивый. Смотри же каким я его постигаю. Вот — Твой же мир, пересозданный по образу и подобию моему“.

Чудо не совершается. Завеса не раздирается, и поэт не слышит голоса сверху. Но в себе, в душе своей, поэт слышит похвалу или осуждение... Этот мир сравнения, и ответственность, эта работа художнической и человеческой совести, этот страшный суд над собой, тем более страшный, что и его приговор остается без подтверждения и ответа свыше, — есть миг „молитвы“, общения с Богом.¹⁹

To conclude this part Chodasevič remarks: "...v praktičeskoj poèzii èti tri momenti otčasti slivajutsja, soprisutstvujut drug drugu."²⁰

Returning to the question of the nature of inspiration, Chodasevič wishes to make the distinction between the human element and the poetic in the poet's personality, which he will later amplify in his article of 1936 "Avtor, geroj, poèt". At present he is only trying to reinforce his idea that the sole source of impressions for a poet is the material world and in specific the poet's own life; without an understanding of the biography we are at a loss to understand how the work was created:

Итак, в основу творческого акта Пушкин кладет вдохновение, как способность к накоплению и осознанию *жизненного опыта*. Поэзия возникает для Пушкина не из произвольного воображения, не из абстрактного философствования...

Поэзия есть преобразование действительности, самой конкретной. Иными словами — в основе поэтического творчества лежит автобиография поэта. В последнем моменте творчества поэт судит себя прежде всего, как человека, ибо из его „человеческих“ впечатлений творится поэзия. „Поэт“ и „человек“ суть две ипостаси единой личности. Поэзия есть прозекция человеческого пути.²¹

In the article "Glupovatost' Poèzii" of 1927 we see Chodasevič still pondering the meaning of inspiration and creation in light of Puškin's experience. This time he has taken upon himself to explain Puškin's remark: "...poèzija dolžna byt' glupovata", which would seem to be incompatible with the elevated view of poetry expressed in a poem like "Prorok". Chodasevič points out that, as usual, to understand Puškin we must look carefully at the context in which such a remark was made, in this case it is a letter to Vjazemskij (May, 1826) which contains the following as well: "Tvoi stichi sliškom umny. A poèzija, prosti Gospodì, dolžna byt' glupovata... Ja bez tvoich pisem glupeju: èto nezdorovo, chot' ja i poèt... Pravda li, čto Baratynskij ženitsja? Bojus' za ego um."²² From this Chodasevič makes the conclusion that, aside from the fact that Puškin often joked about himself, he is making a distinction between the nature of poetry and the personality of the poet, which he left without further explanation: "...po Puškinu, poèzija dolžna byt' glupovata, no poètu nadležit um".²³ This paradox forms the basis for one of Chodasevič's longer discussions of the poetic process. If he was to insist on the material world as the only source of inspiration, he had still to explain the fact that poetry is not a rational "prosaic" reflection or representation of reality. This passage is worth quoting at length as we can consider it Chodasevič's poetic *profession de foi*:

От простой передачи случайных впечатлений, чувств, мыслей, поэзия разнится тем, что она стремится нащупать и выявить то, что лежит за ними: их суть, смысл и связь. Не изложить чувства и мысли, но „шепнуть о том, пред чем язык немеет“ — это и есть вечная, идеальная, а потому в полноте и совершенстве недостижимая цель поэзии. Поэтому-то каждый поэт и ощущает роковое несовершенство своих творений, поэтому-то и воспринимает им самим изреченную мысль, как относительную ложь, что и сама мысль его („острый меч“ по слову Баратынского) всегда не довольно принимающая, а слово не довольно послушно.

Стремясь постигнуть и запечатлеть сокровенный образ мира, поэт становится тайновидцем и экспериментатором: чтобы увидеть и воспроизвести „более реальное, нежели простое реальное“, он смотрит с условной, чаще все неожиданной точки зрения и соответственно располагает явления в необычайном порядке. Все изменяется, предстает в новом облике. В поэтическом видении уже обнаруживается начало демургическое; в произведении оно закрепляется: пользуясь явлением действительности, как символами, как сырыми материалами для своих построений, поэт, не искажая, но преображая, создает новый, собственный мир, новую реальность, в которой незримое стало зримым, неслышное слышимым. Есть каждый раз нечто чудесное в возникновении нового бытия и в том, как, возникнув, оно обретает самостоятельную цельность и закономерность. (Именно степень законченности и гармоничности объективно определяется его подлинность). Чтобы новое бытие не осталось мертвым, поэт придает ему движению его элементам законы, столь же непреложные, как законы обычной действительности.

„Попадая в поэзию“, вещи приобретают четвертое, символическое, измерение, становятся не только тем, чем были в действительности. То же надо сказать о самом поэте. Преобразуется и он. В написанном от первого лица стихотворении, как бы даже ни было оно „автобиографично“ — субъект стихотворения не равняется автору, ибо события пьесы протекают не в том мире, где вращается автор.²⁴

We will stop at this point to examine the development of Chodasevič's theories since 1924. First of all, although he defends his view that poetry is constructed from material reality he now uses some of the vocabulary of the Symbolists: "tajnovidec", "demiurgičeskoe". He also seems to accept their idea of poetry as the expression of the underlying relations between phenomena, although in this case the *correspondances* are strictly horizontal, not vertical. In Chodasevič's poetics the demiurgic principle motivates the poet's interpretation and transformation of this world, and the creation of a new one, but not the revelation of another pre-existing world. Returning to the text we see Chodasevič trying to explain how poetry can have its own internal logic which is at variance with the common sense of the world:

В мире поэзии автор, а вслед за ним и читатель вынуждены отчасти отказаться от некоторых мыслительных навыков, отчасти изменить их: в условиях поэтического бытия они оказываются неприменимы. Так, критерий достоверности отпадает вовсе и заменяется критерием правдоподобности (и то с известными оговорками). Затем постепенно и в разной мере начинают терять цену многие житейские представления, в сумме известные под именем здравого смысла. Оказывается, что мудрость поэзии возникает из каких-то иных, часто противоречащих „здравому смыслу“ понятий, суждений и допущений. Вот это-то лежащее в основе поэзии отвлечение от житейского здравого смысла, это расхождение со здравым смыслом, (на языке обывателя входящее, как часть в так называемое „воображение поэта“) — есть та глуповатость, о котором говорит Пушкин. В действительности, это, конечно, не глуповатость, не понижение умственного уровня, но перенесение его в иную плоскость и соответственная перемена „точки зрения“: ведь и обратно, при взгляде „из поэзии“, со стороны более реального, чем реальное, и более здравого, нежели простое здоровое, — глуповатым, а то и совсем бессмысленным оказывается здравый смысл и на нем построенная действительность. (As a footnote: В обнаженном виде эта тема и звучит особенно часто у поэтов наиболее последовательных (я не сказал великих).) Необходимо отметить, что эти расхождения касаются только „здравого смысла“, не распространяясь на формальную логику, которая остается между поэтическим и реальным миром, как некое координирующее начало. Именно на том, что поэзия преображает, но не отменяет и не искажает действительности, а также на том, что можно назвать „законом сохранения логики“ основана „проверка воображения рассудком“, который требует от поэта Пушкин.²⁵

What is important here is not Chodasevič's defence of non-rational wisdom, familiar from Scripture and Erasmus, or his own version of the Formalist theory of "ostranenie", but the reason for his belief in the equality of form and content. If poetry is to allow itself a certain freedom in its vision of the world and a certain folly in its creation of an imaginary one, then it must still recognise, through the observation of formal logic, its ties to this world. Chodasevič's categorical rejection of such movements as Futurism thus derives not so much from conservative literary tastes, as from the fear that if form is lost poetry will abandon, or worse, distort the very reality it is supposed to transfigure.

With his article of 1936 "Avtor, geroj, poët" we will complete our survey of Chodasevič's Puškin criticism. At this last stage in his career Chodasevič addresses himself with utmost concision to one of the most perplexing questions of poetry, the nature of the poetic ego, or the lyrical "I", and its relation to the biographical personality of the poet. This article has particular significance for us as the ideas expressed in it are decidedly opposed to those of Chodasevič's rivals, Gippius and

Adamovič. He begins with a fragmentary poem by Puškin in which he protests against the identification of himself with the hero of “Kavkazskij plennik”, stating that this is the temptation one inevitably has when reading Puškin, especially when Puškin hints at himself in *Evgenij Onegin*. Nonetheless it is clear that Puškin, by virtue of his creation of Onegin, and not Onegin of Puškin, is the superior. Chodasevič describes this by the formula: “P + O” or “P = O + x” stating that the difference lies in the creative act, where “x = Poët”. He, thus, arrives at the solution: “Puškin = Onegin + Poët”, or in general terms: “Автор = Герой + Poët”. This formula is used to explain a number of problems in poetics. First of all, just as one can compare the difference between Puškin and Onegin as that between a circle and polygon, which might have an infinite number of sides without being a circle, one can see Heroes who try infinitely hard to write poetry without becoming Authors:

Сколько бы Герой ни изображал свою жизнь, какой бы полноты и правдивости не достиг он при этом, его произведение не станет поэтическим... если от природы лишен поэтического начала или если сознательно решил это начало отбросить. Отсюда — неизбежная неудача всех попыток подменить художественное творчество человеческим документом. В человеческом документе Герой как будто равняется Автору, но это равенство — кажущееся и ложное. Автор человеческого документа есть А-П, то-есть существо нетворическое, то-есть все тот же Герой. Между ним и действительным Автором — пропасть, незаполняемая совпадением наименований. Он — автор лишь в том смысле, что механически записывает мысли и чувства Героя. В нем творчество... заменено исповедью — тогда мы имеем дело с заблуждением, с художественной ересью...²⁶

Chodasevič then describes how the authentic work of art is created by the Author, who combines the Poet and the Hero, while keeping them distinct:

В процессе творчества Автор распадается на составные части своего существа — на Поэта и Героя: на творца и тварь. Поэт создает мир произведения. Герой есть Адам, человек этого мира. В истории Героя Автор глазами Поэта созерцает свою человеческую историю. Человеческие чувства, мысли и страсти отданы Герою. Эти чувства, мысли и страсти влекут Героя на путь страданий, греха и смерти, которым Поэт в своем творческом покое остается чужд. Так в самом Авторе страдает, грешит и подпадает смерти Герой, человек, но не Поэт.²⁷

Finally, Chodasevič examines the nature of the Poet on its own:

Если $A = Г + П$, то $П = А - Г$: Поэт есть обезчеловеченный Автор. ...Для Поэта существует лишь проблематика творчества. Герой, посланный в

жизнь Поэтом, страдает и умирает, как солдат на поле сражения... Герой есть пушечное мясо поэзии. Поэт созерцает его судьбу безтрепетно. Сверхчеловек, олимпиец, демон, — Поэт лишен страсти, чувства, морали, смерти. Нельзя отрицать, что он страшен и может быть отвратителен.²⁸

This almost Brjusovian definition of the Poet will be qualified in the end, but for the moment Chodasevič insists that the “daemonic” element is essential to art, disconcerting as that might be:

Позволительно отвергнуть его, но не иначе, как вместе с творчеством. Тот, в ком этот демон не заключен от природы или кто его изгнал из себя, никогда не существовал или погиб, как художник. Искусство — не последняя правда. Можно стать выше искусства, но нельзя одновременно стать выше его и остаться в нем. В этом сознании — гордое смирение художника.²⁹

In his concluding paragraph Chodasevič once again displays complete control of his subject, if at first his formulaic reductions of author, hero and poet reminded us of the Formalist criticism he disapproved of, he now reconciles the demands of such criticism and the demands of poetry with his own restrained humanism:

Автор, однако ж, есть не механическое, а химическое соединение. Элементы, его составляющие — Герой и Поэт — в чистом виде в природе не встречаются. Как никто не видал живого Онегина, так никто не видал и Поэта, отделенного от живого авторского существа. Если бы нам предстал Поэт иначе, как в соединении с Героем, то-есть с человеческим существом Автора, — он показался бы нам кровожадным идолом, „болваном“. Наличие демонического начала в Авторе житейски смягчается, а мистически очищается и искупается его человеческим естеством.³⁰

Even if Chodasevič's devotion to Puškin never was completely understood or adopted by the younger generation of Russian poets in Paris some of the principles expounded above do re-surface in the Paris Note; a certain detachment, an ironic awareness of the conflict between the demands of emotion and artistry and a Symbolist respect for the inviolability of language. If later we see in the poetry of Štejger more of Chodasevič than is usually accepted, in Poplavskij we will see another more extreme manifestation of Symbolism *après* Symbolism, the identification of author, poet and hero.

CHAPTER III

POPLAVSKIJ AND ČISLA

Central to the debate in the criticism of the twenties and thirties on émigré literature was, naturally, concern over the future of the younger generation and the possibility of it continuing and developing Russian literature in exile. As we know from Part One the works of Boris Poplavskij and the journal most associated with him, *Čisla*¹, have generally been regarded as the most direct response by the younger generation to the challenge presented by their elders and the circumstances they found themselves in. At the same time, as we have also seen, if such established critics as Gippius and Chodasevič recognised the symbolic value of Poplavskij and *Čisla* they did not seem to analyse them with much attention, seeing in them simply signs of "decadence" and a lack of orientation; the position adopted at the time by Fedotov and later by Struve. One reason for this history of misunderstanding and neglect is the fact that most of Poplavskij's and *Čisla*'s older critics survived them and could give their own accounts which inevitably interpret the demise of the journal in 1934 and Poplavskij's death at age 32 in 1935 as fulfillment of their worst predictions about the young. Although the younger generation would eventually defend itself, as shown by the post-war memoirs of Varšavskij and Terapiano, at the time the young émigrés were still very much dependent on the support of such figures as Gippius and Chodasevič and were in no position to justify all the contradictions of their nascent literature. Finally, the study of the group around *Čisla* is further confused by the various statements of Adamovič, some of which we have quoted in Part One, who it would appear, had as much to do with initiating this literature as he did with re-writing its history after the war. In an attempt to rectify some of the misconceptions about Poplavskij and *Čisla* we will concentrate on Poplavskij's criticism in this and other journals of the same period, without too many references to the polemics *Čisla* inspired.

However much Adamovič might have been an influence, the organising force behind *Čisla* was provided by his exact contemporary Nikolaj Ocup, who along with Adamovič and Georgij Ivanov (they were all

born in 1894) had belonged to Gumilev's "Čech Poètov". The foundation of *Čisla* by Ocuip was the most important contribution of the "middle" generation to the development of young émigré literature, although throughout this period we can see that by virtue of their earlier formation in Russia this group, which also includes Nina Berberova and Irina Odoevceva, did not always share the interests and preoccupations of their younger contemporaries. Their literature would form the subject of a separate study.

In his preface to the first volume of *Čisla* Ocuip states that one of the hopes of the new venture is to foster a creative atmosphere which will belong as much to the Russian tradition as to the contemporary culture of the West, which are not seen, however, as either stable or above criticism:

Война и революция, в сущности, только dokonчили разрушение того, что кое-как еще прикрывало людей в XIX веке. Мирóвоззрения, верования — все, что между человеком и звездным небом составляло какой-то успокаивающий и спасательный потолок, — сметены или расшатаны.²

The experience of the recent past in Russia and the awareness of similar upheaval in the rest of the world leads to a desire for clarity and simplicity, particularly on the part of the young:

У бездомных, у лишенных веры отцов или поколебленных в этой вере, у всех, кто не хочет принять современной жизни такой, как она дается извне, — обостряется желание знать самое простое и главное: цель жизни, смысл смерти. „Числам“ хотелось бы говорить главным образом об этом.³

This underlines the scepticism of the younger generation towards the efforts of the émigré establishment to do no more than perpetuate the ideals of the past. This is also apparent in a further point, the banishment of political discussion from the pages of *Čisla*:

„Числа“ должны, конечно, иметь ясное, недвусмысленное и твердое отношение к тому, что происходит в Советской России. Наша связь с эмиграцией не только в том, что сами мы эмигранты, эта связь — в разделении нами всех ее задач, но в сборниках не будет места политике, чтобы вопросы сегодняшней минуты не заслоняли других вопросов, менее актуальных, но не менее значительных.⁴

It is not surprising that this combination of almost apocalyptic despair with declared loyalty to the emigration raised doubts in the minds of *Čisla*'s older readership about the journal's seriousness and inner consistency.

These two aspirations of *Čisla*, to exclude political debate and to question the cultural tradition, were particularly provoking to Gippius and Chodasevič. As we demonstrated in the two previous chapters both of them possessed uncompromising ideas on the Meaning of Art, as well as irascible personalities, which must have required a great deal of daring to oppose. Predictably, Gippius and Chodasevič were not slow to react and, sympathetic as they were to the difficult circumstances of the young writers, they both carried on polemics in regard to their favourite subjects, though not, significantly, with the younger generation itself, but with its “representatives” Ocu and Adamovič. Rather than remain aloof from *Čisla* as did Chodasevič, Gippius contributed her criticism of its attitudes in three installments (No. 1, 2-3, 4) under the heading “Literaturnye razmyšlenija” and her pen name “Anton Krajnij”. As we might expect, her arguments against the apolitical stance of the journal are essentially the same as those produced on other occasions; the fact that the emigration is a result of political events means that politics enter into every émigré undertaking, and that ultimately politics influence all aspects of life even if one does not consider recent Russian history; to be outside politics is to be outside life, etc.⁵ Only in her final article does she offer a defence of poetry which, while not related to her views on politics, can be seen as part of the polemics about the meaning of poetry which Chodasevič was waging at the same time with Adamovič. Although she admits it is difficult to write about émigré literature, she does not believe there has occurred, as Adamovič would maintain, a “konec literatury”: “Net, konca literatury, po moemu, ešče ne vidno, a naščet upadka - vo vse vremena kto-to nachodil ee v upadke, kto-to v rascvete. Vopros večno-spornyj i dovol’no prazdny.”⁶ For Gippius, poetry is the form of literature which is most immune from the changes of time and which never loses its effect for those who understand it. These comments are by way of introduction to a review of Georgij Ivanov’s volume of poetry *Rozy* which Gippius highly regarded. In light of the “anti-Art” principle of Adamovič and his influence on the young it is important not to forget Gippius’ own determination to cultivate them and to pass on her own literary convictions:

Особенность стихов — это что их нельзя вполне слить с „литературой“, вместить в нее без остатка. Во времена, когда внимание отвлечено от литературы, стихи остаются. Неизвестно почему вдруг вспоминается о них, думается и никаким сторонним, самым серьезным мыслям дума о стихах не мешает, — иногда помогает.⁷

After this Gippius states that these eternal can only be viewed through the poet's experience of the present:

Второе-же неперменное свойство настоящей поэзии, создаваемой настоящим поэтом — современность.

Поэт не „отдает дань своему времени“ — он просто в нем, в своем живет. Вечное преломляется для него именно в этом времени, и таким, не иным, он вечное видит.⁸

She concludes with one of the beloved ideas of the Symbolists, that poetry is related to music:

На поэтах, по преимуществу лиричных, всего виднее, до какой степени не важны слова сами по себе, и как важна таинственная гармония всегда по времени, всегда новая, делающая стихи магическими.⁹

In Ocu's response to Gippius we have some of the typical traits of the young literature: a rather paradoxical rejection of politics in the name of art, and then a rejection of art in the name of humanity and social consciousness. Accusing Gippius of demagoguery Ocu states that *Čisla* is opposed not to politics, but to its "tyranny":

За последние годы он (Крайний) стал одним из самых ярких представителей тех людей, для которых нужно не простое равенство общественно-политических вопросов с другими человеческими, но полное и подавляющее превосходство первых. Отсюда презрительное, свысока, отношение к „стишкам“, „картинам“, вообще к искусству.

Неужели не пора понять, что все это — большевизм наизнанку.

Неужели определять себя от противного — большевиками.¹⁰

However, rather than restoring art to a position of autonomy, Ocu undermines it even more thoroughly than Gippius. Although he considers that some poets believe their words are their actions, he maintains that for many writers art is a poor substitute for action, citing Gogol', Tolstoj, Dostoevskij and Nekrasov as examples of frustrated social reformers. In the end Ocu ignores Gippius' Symbolist defence of poetry, which she managed to reconcile with her political interests, and simply repeats the kind of Philistinism he ascribed to her:

На пути к деятельному преобразению мира искусство воздвигает преграду, и мир, благодаря поэзии, становится не только более пленительным, но и более ленивым, безвольным, бездейственным.¹¹

Any attempt at describing the background of *Čisla* will necessarily have to include some mention of Adamovič, although his particular critical style often makes it difficult to extract an idea or opinion which is clear and convincing. However, now that we have examined some of

the various articles by Gippius, Chodasevič and Ocup on the nature of poetry, Adamovič's reflections might appear more understandable. Two of Adamovič's most significant pieces of criticism are his speech at a meeting of "Zelenaja lampa" in 1928 entitled "Est' li cel' u poëzii?" and the first of his "Kommentarii", which appeared in the first volume of *Čisla* (1930). As we have said before, Adamovič does not offer a new interpretation of art or a different aesthetic, but rather a superficial anti-aesthetic derived from conflicting sources. In his speech of 1928 he states that modern poetry has lost its meaning as it no longer concerns itself with life and provides no answers or consolation. At the same time he also criticises those who would associate poetry with religion:

Все, кто действительно понимал, что такое религия, начиная с Отцов Церкви и кончая Львом Толстым, относились к искусству, к поэзии, с по-
дозрением.

.....

Ошибка символистов, конечно, в том что они не поняли глубоко разницы между искусством и религией и решили, что поэзия и молитва — одно и то же и завели поэзию в тупик. Религия обещает и не обманывает, поэзия обещает и обманывает. Она отводит человека от земли, отвращает его от жизни и оставляет ни с чем по пути.¹²

However, in between these two comments Adamovič has made a counter claim for poetry:

Единственно, что может объяснить существование поэзии — это ощущение неполноты жизни, ощущение, что в жизни чего-то не хватает, что в ней какая-то трещина. И дело поэзии, ее единственное дело, — эту неполноту заполнить, утолить человеческую душу. Если поэзия этого не делает, не отвлекает человека от жизни, не утоляет его, то, скажу прямо, — это поэзия не настоящая.¹³

One might describe Adamovič's poetics as a kind of *Schadenfreude*; much as he protests that he would like to believe in an artistic ideal, one feels he would be disappointed if he were actually shown it, or else that he is simply too lazy to pursue it. Throughout his criticism, Adamovič will either reject art as a pleasant illusion or as a dangerous lie following a late Tolstoyan ethic. That his attitude was particularly offensive to Gippius and Chodasevič hardly needs mentioning. On the theme of "konec literary" he has this to say:

По самой природе своей литература есть вещь предварительная, вещь, которую можно исчерпать. И стоит только писателю возжаждать „вещей последних“, как литература (своя, личная литература) начнет разрывать-

ся, таять, испепеляться, истончаться, и превратиться в ничто. Будто снимаешь листик за листиком: это не важно и то не важно, это — пустяки и то — всего только мишура. Листик за листиком, безостановочно, безжалостно, в нетерпеливом предчувствии самого верного, самого нужного... которого нет. Есть только листья, как в кочане капусты.¹⁴

For evidence of Adamovič's more positive contribution to the Paris aesthetic we turn to an article of the same year which appeared in *Sovremennye zapiski* (v.41, 1930) called "Načalo". Here he argues again that Russians, having passed through the unprecedented catastrophe of the Revolution, can no longer delude themselves with traditional ideas of high art and culture now that their social and historical foundations have been swept away. If any literature is to be written it should be lyric poetry:

В сущности другой поэзии теперь у нас и нет, — ни сатирической, ни эпической, ни дидактической, ни какой либо еще. Помимо того, все, что в лирике сразу становится очевидно, в других родах искусства еще долго бывает скрыто, хотя и присутствует. Лирика по известному определению есть „разговор душ“. Естественно, что такой разговор избегает всякой декоративности, ищет только самого чистого, самого нужного, — наименее ложного. Под ослепительными лучами того внутреннего света, который есть и природа лирики, и смысл ее существования, все обнаруживается: восемь-двенадцать-шестнадцать строчек, ограниченная площадь и беспощадный прожектор, направленный на нее. Другие виды поэзии — темные дебри, чащи, где еще долго можно блуждать, утешаться „мастерством“, когда здесь уже никаких иллюзии не остается.¹⁵

As we know from previous reading, despite the sense of futility of creating "great" art, many of the Paris poets still believed that it was possible to arrive through personal experience at a deeper understanding of reality which could be recorded in lyric poetry. However, according to Adamovič, not only are we deprived of the ordinary foundations of culture, history and tradition, but also of its higher origins, the *realiora* of the Symbolists:

В глубине сознания будет жить сомнение: не удастся, не может удастся, нечему удастся; цели поэзии мы не увидим, да конечно, ее и нет. Но ведь и у жизни, может быть, нет цели, — не только у творчества. ...Здание разрушено, или вернее само развалилось, — не знаем когда и как. Но развалилось наверно, — только слепые могут этого не видеть, и что-то достраивать, и какие мертвые оболочки еще „охранять“.¹⁶

At the same time that Adamovič claims art has nothing to be honest to, he still demands that it be honest. The poet must bear responsibility, even in a world that has no meaning. His only criterion for judging a

poem is that it speak truthfully of the poet's experience. Such truthfulness will decide all questions of form and technique:

В сущности так и надо было бы прежде всего судить о произведениях искусств: Болтовня это или не болтовня, придумывает ли автор мысли и чувства, или действительно ищет для мыслей и чувств, которые он ни на какие другие обменять не властен? В стихах это узнается вовсе не по благородной рассудительности их или „возвышенности“, а только по степени внутреннего соответствия напева и слова, т.е. по органичности или неорганичности ритма. И когда ритм органичен, то стихотворение может быть бедно и нисколько не интересно, но для когонибудь, хотя бы для одного человека оно оказывается прекрасным, и этому человеку оно на мгновение раскрывает все величие, всю стройность и „божественность“ мироздания, — именно потому, что оно живет настоящей жизнью, единой, той, которой одухотворено все. Такое стихотворение должно было быть написано, его стоило написать.¹⁷

Adamovič considers any other ideas on the place of beauty and form in poetry not only unnecessary, but also dangerous and diabolic. As we inhabit a meaningless world the only good motive for writing poetry derives from a Quixotic love of life, otherwise poetry will become dominated by death and a demonic aestheticism which Adamovič claims has become the main characteristic of modern art, and which he associates with Salieri (i.e. Puškin's) and then Baudelaire and Annenskij:

Победа демона, торжество Сальери привели к последствиям, которые далеко выходят за пределы эстетики. Поэзия в лучших и глубочайших своих созданиях теперь искажает мир, как бы клеветает на него...¹⁸

Having presented some of Adamovič's criticism in less than favourable light, perhaps it is only just to quote the last two paragraphs of his "Načalo" which call for a defence of the potential Mozarts of the modern world against the Salieris:

И вот что может быть есть „единое на потребу“ современной поэзии, — и что включить в себе все остальное: надо бы попытаться вернуть низложенным моцартам их царство, и для этого надо, чтобы они вспомнили тайну „власти над душами“. Мало иметь талант. Как это ни странно, произошло на земле нечто такое, отчего талант стал не только благодатью и помощью для поэтов, но сделался и помехой ему, препятствием. Надо препятствие преодолеть. Сальерические поэты не вели борьбы с моцартами, они заняли пустое место. Они место уступят, да невозможно с их стороны сопротивление. Но надо, чтобы моцарты прислушались и поняли новую „музыку мира“, ощутили бы духовный уровень, которого достиг сальеризм. Одним словом надо, чтобы божьи дети не были ничтожнее дьявольских.

Пока этого не произойдет, поэзия не перестанет распространять по свету противотворческие, в подлинном смысле слова, начала, часто против своей воли и сознания, исключительно в силу своей изначальной природы, оскорбленной и тоскующей. Смерть будет в искусстве одолевать любовь — во всем своем „леденящем очаровании“, в „разливе синеющих крыл“. И только близорукость или равнодушие позволят по-прежнему, как ни в чем ни бывало утверждать, что поэзия и в наши дни имеет просветительное, общественное, культурное, воспитательное или какое угодно другое положительное значение.¹⁹

Turning to the essays by Poplavskij we must first accustom ourselves to a change in style and tone; the urbane professional journalism of the older generation is replaced by the intensity and hyperbolism of the younger. On principle Poplavskij rejected the forms of civilised life and the apparatus of culture, believing they hindered the free development of the human spirit, although this did not prevent him from contributing to the émigré press. Much as Poplavskij's articles defy classification and seem to be for the most part only reflections of his own personal preoccupations and enthusiasms, they still, by virtue of their extremism, offer a unique insight into the mentality of the younger generation. Not only did Poplavskij identify his own destiny with that of the emigration, but he was also, despite his love for exaggeration, a perceptive analyst of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the émigré position. If in reading these articles we realise that his ideas are not wholly original, we cannot deny the seriousness and vitality with which he explored them.

In one of his first published articles, "Zametki o poëzii" of 1928, Poplavskij initiates one of his main themes of criticism, that one should try to "exit" from literature rather than "enter" it: instead of absorbing material from the outside world and transforming it into a work of art, poetry should expand as much as possible beyond its given theme based on concrete details. The result of such poetics will not be a "proizvedenie" but a "poëtičeskij dokument, — oščuščenje živov, ne poddajuščesja v ruki tkani liričeskogo opyta."²⁰ For Poplavskij poetry must be inspired by a dynamic "Dionysian" principle, which will sustain it as a living growing entity, and which will lead the poet into a state of ecstasy: "...v takom slučae nevedomo, čto vyjdet; i často v proizvedenii, v konce, polučaetsja neizmerimo bol'she, čem bylo v načale, v proizvodivšem; i tol'ko togda stichotvorenje est' otkrovenie, i poëzija bol'she stichotvorca."²¹ In this brief article we have also another feature of Poplavskij's metapoetics which will become increasingly dominant in

his work; the interpretation of philosophical and historical questions according to images and legends of antiquity. In this instance he ends by equating conventional notions of art with the decadence of late classical times: "Voobšče, poezija — Temnoe Delo, i Apollon — samaja pozdnjaja upadočnaja ljubov' grekov."²²

In Poplavskij's first contribution to *Čisla* (No.2-3, 1930-31) "O mističeskoj atmosfere molodoj literatury v èmigracii", we have a full scale attack on Art, which despite its obvious descent from the well-known Russian tradition of anti-aesthetics, carries with it a certain weight derived from the experience of émigré life. Rather than confine himself to one specific approach to the question of the validity of artistic creation, Poplavskij draws on a range of arguments, from the ethical, ascetic and mystical to the historical and socio-economical. To the teachings of Tolstoj Poplavskij unites the light scepticism of Adamovič and the eschatology of Merežkovskij, trying all the same to find some justification for writing at all. Characteristically he is not satisfied to condemn beauty in art but must also condemn it in life:

Искусства нет и не нужно. Любовь к искусству — пошлость, подобная пошлости поисков красивой жизни... Разве всякая красота не зловеще отвратительна в своем совершенстве, как отвратительна дивная музыка Баха, которая по стеклянным лестницам вечно восходит и отдаляется, оставляя за собою ужасающую тьму и одиночество. Красивая и чистая духовная жизнь такая же пошлость, как и красивое искусство.²³

For Poplavskij the only redeeming virtue in art or life is pity, which he considers to be the essence of Christianity. The only form of art he will approve of is one which will express this pity, such as the personal correspondence between friends, or a letter "otpravlennoe po neizvestnomu adresu". He then states that even writing can be dismissed as unnecessary for this expression of oneself:

Но... не нужно уже искусства, не нужно книг и журналов, не нужно прессы. Ибо в повороте головы, в манере завязывать галстук, в тоне, главное, в тоне — больше человека, чем во всех его стихах.²⁴

The emigration, as Poplavskij sees it, offers the perfect setting for the realisation of this artless art:

И не сейчас, а когда уже вовсе не останется в эмиграции никаких журналов, не собраний, когда даже самые удачливые и модные литераторы окончательно обнищают, состарятся и обезнадежатся, тогда в кафэ в поздний час, несколько погибших людей скажут настоящие слова, скажут и замолчат от восхищения перед миром, перед Богом и перед собой, и освободятся и улыбнутся и закроют глаза. Скажут и умрут, как нищие цари.²⁵

Only then, like the light of extinct stars, will their influence be felt. The only morally justifiable action is to perish in the hope that one's agony will illumine the future, as did those of Christ, Socrates and Mozart. Already Poplavskij sees in the poetry of his con-temporaries signs of this radiant self-destruction which he considers to be a musical spirit which has found its home in Russian Paris. Quoting from poems by Ocup, Adamovič, Gippius and Georgij Ivanov he states they are all imbued with the same spirit, even Chodasevič, and defines them as the Paris School:

Совершенно в той-же тональности и Владислав Ходасевич, о котором говорят, что он где-то на другой стороне. Это неправильно, существует только одна парижская школа, одна метафизическая нота, все время растущая — торжественная, светлая и безнадежная.

Я чувствую в этой эмиграции согласие с духом музыки. (Потому что есть разные эмиграции). Отсюда моя любовь к этой эмиграции. Я горжусь ею.²⁶

As we have said, the critics of the older generation did not hesitate to condemn what they saw as the decadence of *Čisla*. Later in 1931 Poplavskij came to the defence of *Čisla* in an article "O smerti i žalosti v Čislach" which appeared in the short-lived newspaper *Novaja gazeta*. He states that whether one likes it or not the younger generation has rejected both positivism and aestheticism in the name of mysticism. The importance of *Čisla* lies in the fact that it is the only émigré journal which speaks accurately of this development among the young. As part of their search for metaphysical knowledge it is only natural that they should contemplate the meaning of death, especially as they had in their childhood experienced it at first hand. As before, Poplavskij says that out of these reflections arises the feeling of pity and compassion for suffering, which is the great legacy of Russian literature and the only force which the emigration can use in its struggle with Bolshevism. If in his earlier articles Poplavskij seems to indulge in a philosophy of non-resistance to evil, he now realises that such an attitude will only condone the violence and inhumanity of the modern world. Citing Merežkovskij's apocalyptic *Atlantida* (1930) Poplavskij offers his own interpretation of modern history and the place the young émigrés have in it:

Но прав Мережковский, ужасаясь. Наступает кажется абстрактная нечеловеческая эпоха, новая Ассирия, царство огромных масс и плоскостей безпошадных к личности. И не даром новейшая архитектура так увлекается чисто ассирийской схематичностью и монументальностью. С этой точки зрения человек лишь эфирная единица, которую легко можно складывать

или выводить в расход как угодно... Так и Ассирийцы и смотрели на покоренные народы, и за это их так глубоко ненавидело глубочайшее лирическое личное начало еврейского племени. Все это конечно лишь предчувствия и веянья. "Le sens trop précis rature ma vague littérature", говорил Маллармэ. Точной идеологии еще нет, но не пора ли мистической молодежи открыто и как можно резко заявить о своей тенденции. Но как раз резкости и отчетливости, даже необходимо непримиримости и грубости еще не научился „эмигрантский молодой человек“ хотя бы у „братьев“ своих сюрреалистов. Нужно бороться, может быть, даже некультурными средствами, нужно среди грохоты кричать о своем. Ибо наше поколение вскипело и пора ему уже вырваться на поверхность, или сердце его разорвется и оно погибнет.²⁷

In the last three articles under discussion we see Poplavskij define and develop more clearly his "vague" ideology. He seems to turn from a completely inward looking analysis of his views on art, which can only approach the outside world with the desire to *épater*, to call for action on the part of the younger émigrés. In reading his virtual manifestoes we must remember to make the distinction between his criticism of the aesthetics of the older generation, and his hostility to the Soviet régime. As we have had occasion to notice before, however much the émigrés of Paris might have disagreed on the means of countering Bolshevism, their motives and goals were surprisingly similar.

In the article of 1932 "Sredi somnjenij i očevidnostej", which was published in the journal *Utverždenija*, Poplavskij returns to the idea that the new Surrealist literature of the West has something to offer the Russians; he is attracted by the efforts of Joyce and Aragon in particular to break down the artifices of genre based literature. Believing that only a completely personal and honest art can oppose the falsification and institutionalism of Soviet literature, he says the young Russians must create a "shameless" literature which will be written in total "ecstatic" freedom and read by only a small group of friends. As far as Poplavskij is concerned, all other forms of literature and cultural life are now obsolete and impotent in view of the imminent disaster facing Europe. His ambition for the émigrés is that they form a world-wide secret society devoted to the defence of the spiritual life. In a long and colourful digression Poplavskij compares modern capitalistic Europe to late imperial Rome, which could no longer call on its citizens to defend it from the barbarians, having turned into a society of masters and slaves. The first duty of the émigrés then is to attempt to rouse Europe from its lethargy and to insist it reform itself before it loses the loyalty of its population. Despite their own experience of the economic and

social injustices of European countries, Poplavskij still believes that the émigrés will come to their defence as they know what the alternative might mean, and as they are Europeans themselves. Should Europe fail to understand their message the émigrés might still survive until a better time:

Тогда поручим свое сердце благословенной госпоже святой бедности, невесте св. Франциска Ассизского и Серафима Саровского, — и временно уйдем в свое апокалипсическое искусство. Но будем помнить, что только самые физически сильные, самые образованные, самые стоически-настроенные смогут выжить. Вновь посеять древние семена, возродить сперва тайные союзы, немногочисленные секты; потом, 12 часов „ударно“ работая — петь гимны и псалмы; уничтожаемые, но непреклонные, — вынести вновь на свет наше абсолютное утверждение Свободы и Духа.²⁸

However closely Poplavskij's eschatology might have endeared him to the Merežkovskijs, he could not approve of Gippius' ceaseless efforts to organise the émigrés on a formal basis. In "Čelovek i ego znakomye" (*Čisla*, 1934) he reiterates that the young émigrés are alienated by "official" meetings and discussions, much as they are preoccupied by the issues presented at them. For Poplavskij, the difference is the same as between the Christianity as preached by Christ Himself to His immediate following and that which was developed and institutionalised by St. Paul. The emigration can only achieve its purpose as long as it imitates primitive Christianity and upholds the idea of a visionary Russia:

Эмиграция есть не армия будущей России, даже не кадры ее, скользящие в бездействии, а просто какая то русская манера смотреть на мир (ибо там, где два еврея читают Тору, там и Палестина). Россия, если она действительно интеллигбель, живая идея, не нуждается вовсе в огромном количестве поклонников. Отсюда я часто оправдываю явление так раздражающего отцов эмигрантского благополучного отношения к миру и какой то новой стоической бодрости, ибо жизнь ее не на собраниях и не в передовых статьях, а там же, где и всякая жизнь: в дружеском кругу, в мало понятной ее полурукописной литературе и в особой русской грусти каждого жеста, каждого слова, каждого тоже свои личные счета, в тайну которых невозможно проникнуть со стороны.²⁹

At the end of this article Poplavskij makes a dramatic departure from the position held in "O mističeskoj atmosfere molodoj literatury v èmigracii" where he adopts a Tolstoyan ethic and preaches pity: "Žalost' v forme vsjakogo roda učastija (i, konečno, gorazdo vyše davat' den'gi, čem davat' mysli. I malejšij parad Armii Spasenija stoit

vsego Luvra).” He now considers it essential that Russia learn that a purely materialistic positivist ethic is incompatible with the true nature of man, even at the price of further suffering:

Чему, собственно, вы огорчаетесь? — хочется мне всегда спросить; ведь, если Россия есть, как идея, она бессмертна — неистребима, не нуждается в газетных статьях, и в свое время круг преступления закончится кругом наказания, а он в свою очередь кругом рассказанья, и „бесноватый усядется у ног Христа“, как говорит Мережковский. Напрасно Вы думаете, большевизм вовсе не такое поверхностное явление для России, ибо не только он уже был в Писаревско-Добролюбовском предпочтении хорошо сшитого сапога Венере Милосской, но и в страстном радикализме Толстого он уже был, да и вообще в глубоко свойственном русскому желании свести христианство только к христианской морали, все это ошибка масштаба, назначение которой привести человека в „темную ночь“ святого Жуана де ла Круза. После которой, то есть после полного, предельного, разочарования во всяком „позитивном“ счастье только и начинается религиозная жизнь... и даже принципиально жалко, что в России так слабо получается с материальным благополучием, ибо только тогда когда оно будет повсеместно достигнуто, человек, испробовав его, войдет в окончательную „темную ночь“, то есть в мистическую смерть, только через которую и доходит человек до христианства. „Чем хуже, чем лучше“. Мы заговорим с народом тогда, когда он захочет нас слушать, а пока мы знаем, что никакая социальная путаница не может разрушить личной жизни человека, на глубине которой находится его величайшая радость, его личное, никому не передаваемое общение с человеком и Богом.³¹

In his last article “Vokrug Čisel”, which appeared in the final issue of *Čisla* in 1934, Poplavskij once again rises to the defence of the journal and the younger generation of émigrés. For most of the article Poplavskij repeats his earlier arguments on the absolute value of “ličnost” and “svoboda” as the justification for the emigration and as the foundation of its literature. He claims that *Čisla* has been one of the great experiments of the emigration and has acquitted itself successfully in face of opposition and misunderstanding. The genius of *Čisla* derives from its freedom from émigré politics, its conception of Russia as a spiritual entity and its acceptance of the life and culture of Europe:

Новая эмигрантская литература, та, что служилась в изгнании, честно сознается, что ничего иного и не знает и что ее лучшие годы, годы наиболее интенсивного отзвука на окружающее проходят здесь в Париже. Не Россия и не Франция, а Париж (или Прага, Ревель и т.д.) ее родина, с какой-то только отдаленной проекцией на русскую бесконечность, как Афины или Иос были родиною пишущего грека с второстепенной проекцией на огромный античный мир. Эмигрантской критике это кажется наивностью,

она еще зачастую загипнотизирована старой Атлантидой — Россией символизма, которая для нас все больше туманная „священная история“.

.....

Но о России и не по французски, а как и о чем хотим, безо всякого разращения, но с западной откровенностью и некой религиозной обреченностью самому себе и своему национальному происхождению... (*Числа*) авангард русского западничества и как таковые имеют за собой долгую культурную традицию, но они метафизически непримиримы, и если Россия все таки пройдет мимо личности и свободы... мы никогда не вернемся в Россию и вечная любовь к России будет тогда заключаться в вечной ссоре с Россией...³²

For Poplavskij *Čisla* has already served its purpose and has done as much as it can to shake off the atrophying influence of the older generation in certain areas, while proving its solidarity with the emigration as a whole in its prolonged struggle with the Soviet colossus:

Поэтому *Числа* уже сделало свое дело, самое большое культурное дело, которое сделано после революции, в то время, как советская литература, несмотря на обилие талантов и на грандиозность масштабов, все более погружается в официальную мертвечину и астрономическое подхалимство; причем, увы: искреннее подхалимство, не только власти, но и вообще эпохе, классу человеку улицы, типичный феномен продолжающейся русской болезни ценности: неуважение к самому себе и к своему личному неповторимому опыту, от которой: скука, пустота, фальш, потеря жизни.

Журнал не есть механическое соединение людей и талантов, людей даже самых крупных, талантливых, даже первоклассных. Журнал есть идеология или инициатива идеологии. И хотя некоторые критики *Чисел* писали о №. 1, что журнал построен на надеждах, а не на реальностях, — смутное, музыкальное веянье было предугадано редактором правильно.

Все это создалось, скристаллизовалось, выявилось, сговорилось вокруг правильно понятого направления самоутверждения „эмигрантского духа“, из за отсутствия которого погибло столько газет и журналов.

Числа есть атмосферическое явление, почти единственная „атмосфера безграничной свободы“, где может дышать новый человек и он не забудет ее даже в России.³³

Lengthy as these quotations have been, they serve to illustrate the impossibly difficult task Poplavskij set himself, to create an artless art and to generate a non-Soviet Russian avant-garde in the emigration based on the “power of the powerless”. In the chapter which follows and in Part Three when Poplavskij’s poetry is discussed, we will trace the effects of these positions.

CHAPTER IV

THE LAST YEARS: 1935-1939

The death of Boris Poplavskij in 1935 marks a definite turning point in the history of Russian literature in Paris, for not only had the émigrés lost one of their most promising young talents, but they also became aware of how precariously as a whole the younger generation was living. At the same time the various political and economic crises occurring around them divided the émigrés into even more factions. As Gippius bitterly noted in the outline of her "Istorija intelligentskoj èmigracii" this process of fragmentation was accompanied among the older generation of the intellectuals by an acceptance of Stalin and among the younger generation by a certain scepticism and passivity, trends which made it even more difficult to sustain, especially in the economic climate of the thirties, a large variety of émigré journals and publishing houses. (In this regard we might recall the curtailment of *Čisla* in 1934.) All the same, even if these last years before the war were over-shadowed by imminent catastrophe many of the émigré writers continued to work effectively. Of these, Chodasevič and his successor as literary editor for *Vozroždenie*¹, Jurij Mandel'stam, offer in their historical criticism a counterbalance to the highly subjective approaches of Gippius, Adamovič and Poplavskij.

As we pointed out in our chapter on his Puškin criticism, it is a mistake to represent Chodasevič as escaping from the demands of the present into a more manageable past; rather we must see Chodasevič's historicism as his most successful means of encouraging and understanding the literature of the present. Although his numerous reviews of contemporary poetry show that Chodasevič was just as interested in the daily life of émigré literature as Gippius and Adamovič, it is in his historical reflections and memoirs that Chodasevič best applies his concept of the literary "sverchbiografija" which unites all poets of the past and present.

In *Nekropol'*, Chodasevič's last publication (1939), we once again see that combination of talents which made the Puškin literature so important.² For here Chodasevič is not only able to record meticulously

his own time as he did that of Puškin's, but he is also writing about those people who directly influenced him and his career as a poet. As with all of Chodasevič's critical work, beneath the ostensibly dry surface, (he insists in the forward that all the material is based on direct experience or written documentation), there is a rich source of ideas on poetry and the meaning of a poet's life. If in comparison with Adamovič Chodasevič seems to have been unduly severe with the younger generation in Paris, then in reading *Nekropol'* we realise how much he himself had to struggle against his older contemporaries before the Revolution.

For our purposes one of the most revealing memoirs concerns Nina Petrovskaja, a protégée of Brjusov and the prototype of Renata in his novel *Ognennyj angel*.³ Writing in 1928 soon after her death in Paris, Chodasevič describes the circumstances in which he came to know her and the way she became a victim of Brjusov's bizarre machinations. Rather like that of the poet Knjazez in Achmatova's "Poëma bez geroja", Petrovskaja's fate appears as representative of the darker side of the Silver Age. For Chodasevič the chief danger of the Symbolist theory, as expounded by Brjusov, of the unity of the artist's life and work lay in the unnatural cultivation of extreme emotions which tended to destroy rather than enhance creativity. Under the apparent devotion to the "artistic life" there developed the idea that the legend around a poet was more important than the poetry itself. While appreciating the consistency with which people like Petrovskaja pursued their obsessions, Chodasevič is still highly disapproving of the artificiality of their position:

Символисты не хотели отделять писателя от человека, литературную биографию от личной. Символизм не хотел быть только художественной школой, литературным течением. Все время он порывался стать жизненно-творческим методом, и в том была его глубочайшая, быть может, невоплотимая правда, но в постоянном стремлении к этой правде протекла, вся его история. Это было ряд попыток, порой истинно героических, — найти сплав жизни и творчества, своего рода философский камень искусства. Символизм упорно искал в своей среде гения, который сумел бы слить жизнь и творчество воедино. Мы знаем теперь, что гений такой не явился, формула не была открыта. Дело свелось к тому, что история символистов превратилась в историю разбитых жизней, а их творчество как бы недовоплотилось...⁴

Chodasevič's personal experience of the excesses of Symbolism was particularly associated with Brjusov to whom is dedicated the second memoir of *Nekropol'*. Without entering into a detailed account of their

relation, which can be found in David Bethea's biography, we can see in Chodasevič's disenchantment with Symbolism and Brjusov the origins of his critical position in Paris. If in his work on Puškin Chodasevič appears to emphasise the mastery of form and technique, we must realise that this in no way prevented him from criticising the Formalists, the followers of Brjusov. For Chodasevič any deviation from the Puškinian unity of form and content was anathema, so it is not surprising that he should attack both the pure formalism of the Futurists as well as the formlessness of the poets of the "human document". In two articles of 1927 Chodasevič leaves us with no doubts on his conviction that the breakdown of the Puškinian aesthetic is intimately related with the rise of Bolshevism. Having noted in his memoirs the ease with which Brjusov turned to the Communist régime⁵, Chodasevič explains in "O formalizme i o formalistach" the relation between Formalism, Futurism and Bolshevism. Although he qualifies his remarks by distinguishing between those Formalists who for various reasons must refrain from any other form of criticism in the Soviet Union and those who have adopted it out of hostility to the traditions of Russian literature, Chodasevič makes the following generalisation:

Неуважение к теме писателя, к тому, ради чего только и совершает он свой тяжелый подвиг, типично для формалистов. Правда, родилось оно из общения с футуристами, которые сами не знали за собой ни темы, ни подвига. Но, распространенное на художников иного склада, это неуважение превращается в принципиальное, вызывающее презрение к человеческой личности и глубоко роднит формализм с мироощущением большевиков.⁶

This idea is repeated in another article about Puškin, "Besy". On this occasion Chodasevič is defending the name of Puškin against Adamovič's trite statement that Pasternak had discovered a world that was richer and more complex than the one Puškin lived in. Defining Puškin's "zavet" as the depiction of the greatest complexity by means of the greatest simplicity, Chodasevič associates the rise of modern Imperial Russia with the language and literature of Puškin: the destruction of one has led to the destruction of the other:

Великие мещане по духу, они в мещанском большевизме услышали его хулиганскую разудалость — и сумели стать „созвучны эпохе“. Они разворачивают пушкинский язык и пушкинскую поэтику, потому что слышать грохот разваливающегося здания — и воспевают его разваливающимися стихами...⁷

The resultant "complexity" of such poetry, as seen in the Futurists and in Pasternak, is thus nothing more than an artificial effect.

If in these articles and in the memoirs we do not have a direct link with the development of poetry in Paris then in the articles of the thirties we see how Chodasevič could bring together the past and present of Russian literature. In 1928 there formed under the general tutelage of Chodasevič the literary group "Perekrestok". Not as large as the *Čisla* group it did manage to produce three "sborniki" with the same name. In his review of one of the issues in 1930 Chodasevič applauds the efforts of these poets of the younger generation to resist the influence of Russian modernism, Futurism in particular. Most of the review, however, is taken up with Chodasevič's last memories of Russia when in the years 1921-1922 he saw the decline of Futurism as a movement and its assimilation into the personal techniques of Pasternak and Majakovskij. He then recalls how surprised he was when he arrived in Paris in 1925 to find that there was still interest in Futurism; a sign of the naiveté of the younger émigrés who did not seem to understand that the emigration and Futurism were incompatible. As far as he is concerned the only way the disintegration of Russian poetry can be reversed is through the adoption by the young of a definite programme based on the traditions of the Russian past which will unite various individual poets into a new movement. In these statements on the necessity of countering the Bolshevik influence in literature and of organising a specifically émigré movement among the young poets Chodasevič reveals his own desire to act, like Gippius and Adamovič, through the next generation. Unfortunately, however, we soon notice the authoritarian tone of voice with which Chodasevič addresses the young, even when encouraging them:

Должен заметить прямо и наперед, что участники „Перекрестка“ — ученики, а не сложившиеся поэты. Произведений ценности абсолютной в сборнике нет. Но если у его участников действительно есть воля к общей работе в том направлении, о котором я говорил, если их объединение не случайно то в дальнейшем для них не только открыты пути к индивидуальному совершенствованию...но и в качестве цельной группы они могут положить начало важному и благому движению.⁸

This question of the right approach towards the younger generation will reach its climax with the death of Poplavskij. In the meantime Chodasevič continued to appraise the work of the young according to its opposition to Futurism and his own high standards. As he states above the only way poetry can continue is if it takes a firm stand on matters of form and its future direction. In the article "Krizis poëzii"

of 1934 Chodasevič notes with irony and irritation the absence of either form or direction in the poetry written in Paris, singling out Lidija Červinskaja's volume *Približenija* for analysis of these defects. Having dealt with the abuses of Formalism he now turns his attention to the other extreme which he considers to be the besetting sin of émigré poets, insufficient regard for principles of composition and grammar:

В Париже, Берлине, Брюсселе, Белграде, Праре, Софии, Риге, Харбине, Шанхае, а порой и в Америке...выходят такие стихотворные сборники, что диву даешься: как, каким образом, после двухсотлетнего существования поэзии, столь углубленной внутренне и столь разработанной технически, какова русская, — находится еще множество людей, не имеющих понятия о существе и смысле поэзии, не умеющих грамотно „уладить куплет“ свой, несущих в литературу самые убогие, затрепанные, истертые мысли, облеченные в самую беспомощную, а то и просто безграмотную форму?⁹

According to Chodasevič the fault lies with the Russian intelligentsia of the late nineteenth century, who along with their utilitarian conception of literature, believed that poets lived on inspiration alone. In reviewing Červinskaja's volume Chodasevič is careful to point out her strengths, her "nesomnennoe darovanie" and "izjaščnyj vkus"; all the same, most of his criticism is negative. While defending her right to express feelings of "rasterjannost'" and "ustalost'" he cannot forgive the lack of a definite "literaturnoe mirovozzrenie" in her work. As we know from his studies of Puškin, and from his other reviews of contemporary poetry, Chodasevič believed every emotion or idea can be presented in literature, but only as long as it done so deliberately and artistically. The principle of Puškinian economy, where each word is placed with a specific meaning, is for Chodasevič the foundation of poetry, which he sees being gradually eroded by his younger contemporaries:

В литературном смысле Червинская ничего не имеет силы ни до конца принять, ни вполне отвергнуть. Стихи ее, словно не знают, какими им быть, и у них нет отчетливого желания быть какимнибудь. Лично не пройдя никакого поэтического пути, Червинская как бы уже прошла все, и во всех разуверилась, и все оставили в ней горький осадок усталости, ощущение ненужности и безцельности. Она даже умеет придать некоторую болезненную прелесть своему разуверению и бессилию, — но все таки это не что иное, как знамение тяжкого поэтического кризиса. Бессилие Червинской не только ей принадлежит. Она лишь отваялась с наибольшей открытостью и своеобразным умением обнаружить то, что в разных степенях присуще огромному большинству ее поэтических сверстников.¹⁰

Chodasevič's assessment of the situation in Paris becomes even more damning in his long introduction to a review of three non-Parisian poets whom he approves of (Raisa Bloch, Il'ja Goleniščev-Kutuzov and Alla Golovina), under the title "Novye stichi" (1935). Just as he derided the Parisians in 1925 for their "provincial" interest in Futurism Chodasevič now derides their pretensions to hegemony in terms of the poetry of the emigration as a whole. While admitting that there is a certain unity of themes and world view amongst the Paris poets he denies that this in itself gives them a right to consider themselves a literary movement, and in particular, one which is superior to the efforts of other groups. The formal carelessness which Chodasevič noted in Červinskaja, as well as her thematic narrowness have become the standard by which the Paris poets judge themselves and others. In defence of these other poets and in defence of poetry itself Chodasevič made the following attack on Montparnasse which has since become well known to students of émigré poetry:

Вернемся, однако, к той „душегрейке новейшего уныния“, в которую так любовно кутаются наши столичные поэты, и посмотрим, чего она сама стоит. Их любимый лиризм страдает тем основным пороком, что — он уныл, а не трагичен. В основе его лежит не трагедия, а всего только неудача — личная или социальная. Наш „столичный“ поэт напоминает не Эдипа, не Прометея, не Манфреда, а всего лишь массового неудачника, замученного личными или классовыми неприятностями. Его история — не трагедия, а мещанская слезная драма. Не боги его приковали к скале, а собственная нетитаничность — к столику монпарнасской кофейне.¹¹

As Chodasevič sees it, the insidiousness of the Paris mentality lies not only in the degradation of art, but also in the degradation of the artistic personality on the human level. Severe and sarcastic as Chodasevič could be he still held out an ideal of poetry which can redeem even the most desperate of lives:

Говоря о необходимости литературного развития, я под ним подразумеваю далеко не только приобретение специальных знаний, навыков, опыта. Я имею в виду и опыт душевный, весьма „человечный“. Из молодых поэтов наших действительно ничего не выйдет, пока они не поймут, что никакое творчество, даже посвященное изображению предельного отчаяния, — с предельным отчаянием не совместно. Поэт, не обретающий душевной опоры в самом творчестве, в какие бы тона отчаяния оно ни было окрашено, — никогда ничего замечательного не создаст. Обратное: возможность создать нечто из самого своего отчаяния, из распада своего — уже есть гарантия против того последнего отчаяния и распада, при котором, конечно, естественнее всего ничего не писать. „Печаль моя светла“, говорит Пушкин. Он не был бы не только Пушкиным, но и вообще не

был бы поэтом, если бы не сказал этого, ибо для всякого поэта всякая печаль в конце концов, хотя бы на самом дне своем, — светится: светом самой поэзии.¹²

Within two weeks of this article Chodasevič was called to defend himself against the accusations of Adamovič who had declared that Chodasevič was devoid of sympathy and understanding of the younger poets. In his reply “*Žalost’ i žalost’*” Chodasevič expands on the principal themes of his previous article; that the young poets are unnecessarily destroying themselves, both as artists and as human beings by adopting the anti-poetics of Adamovič and that Paris, far from being a centre of Russian culture is a worse environment for the younger generation than Warsaw or Prague. However critical he may be of the efforts of the Paris poets Chodasevič asserts that at least he takes them seriously:

Какая же значит, разница между Адамовичем и мной, в чем наше расхождение? В том, что я не считаю молодых поэтов даже из средней массы безнадежными и именно потому полагаю возможным упрекать их. Адамович оценивает их не выше, чем я, но только не считает возможным их упрекать, ибо, по его мнению, лучшее, чего они могут достигнуть (и достигли в лице Червинской) — это сознание того, что творчество им недоступно. Ну, кто же из нас жесточе? Или, лучше сказать: кто в большей степени обладает той обидной снисходительностью, которая горше всякой суровости?¹³

The full extent of the tragedy of the emigration and its effect on the future of Russian literature was not, of course, lost on Chodasevič. Even if he did not write much poetry at this stage in his life we can read these articles as rhetorical Cassandra-like protests against the fatal blindness of those around him. Within six months of the writing of the above Poplavskij was dead and Chodasevič was compelled to see his prophecies fulfilled. In his article of 17 October 1935, a week after Poplavskij's death, Chodasevič writes with that combination of sympathy and severity which characterise all his reflections on the younger generation.¹⁴ His account of the circumstances in which Poplavskij lived and worked remind us unmistakably also of those surrounding Nina Petrovskaja in “*Konec Renaty*”. Chodasevič begins by stating that Poplavskij was an undoubtedly gifted poet whose loss is a major one for the Russian emigration. Although he claims not to want to revive his polemics with Adamovič on the subject, he paraphrases his earlier observations on the decadent atmosphere of Montparnasse and says that a disaster such as Poplavskij's death was unavoidable. On this

occasion, however, Chodasevič turns his attention away from the immediate milieu of Montparnasse to the emigration as a whole, which he maintains is as much to blame for the failure of the younger generation to establish themselves as writers as the individuals in question. For Chodasevič the determining factor has been the indifference of the older generation of writers to which the young had turned "ne tol'ko počitel'no, no i ljubovno". In describing his own rôle Chodasevič states that however exacting he might have been he has never been indifferent. From purely literary matters Chodasevič goes on to criticise the hypocrisy of the émigrés who only show an interest in someone like Poplavskij when it is too late: "Kogda oni umirajut, totčas že razdaetsja 'pochval i slez nenužnyj chor', poka oni živы — o nich molčat". He concludes with a warning that unless there is a definite change in the treatment of the young more sacrifices will occur: "Ja ponimaju, konečno, čto èta stat'ja — butylka v more. No brosit' ee menja prinuždaet sovest'. Esli za Butkevičem, Boldyrevym, Poplavskim posledujut ešče žertvy, to kto budet za nich otvečat'?"¹⁵

Our purpose here has been not to investigate in detail Chodasevič's critical opinions of the work of the younger generation, but rather to establishing his general approach to the problems of émigré literature. Thus, despite his disapproval of Montparnasse and his unceasing demands for a higher standard of art, Chodasevič never abandoned a belief in the purpose of the emigration. It is his sense of the underlying unity of Russian literature and the need for the émigrés to sustain its ideals as best they could that allowed Chodasevič to suspend his sharper judgements when necessary. In three further articles for *Vozroždenie*, "Podvig", "Krovavaja pišča" (both 1932) and "Literatura v izgnanii" (1933) we have ideas which are not unsimilar to those of Gippius and even Poplavskij, and which will be developed by Jurij Mandel'stam.

In "Krovavaja pišča" Chodasevič discusses the prophetic nature of Russian literature and the fate which befalls all prophets: misunderstanding and violent death. From Trediakovskij to his own contemporaries Chodasevič lists most of the great writers of Russia and the various ways they were tormented, whether by the state, society or the people. Although he mentions only by name immediate victims of the past or of the Soviet régime he clearly includes the émigré poets as part of this process: "Pri ètom — govorju tol'ko ob umerščich, ne nazyvaja živыch s kotorymi my vstrečaemsja každyj den', kotorye plečom k pleču s nami soveršajut svoj put' k gibeli..."¹⁶ Russkomu pisatelju kazni ne izbežat': a už kto, kak i kogda budet ee ispolnitelem, kak složatsja obsto-

jatel'stva, èto delo slučaja."''¹⁷ At the same time Chodasevič sees that behind this apparently haphazard and absurd destructiveness there is a great compliment being paid to Russian writers; they are important enough to be considered a threat:

...ни одна литература (говорю в общем) не была так пророчесвенна, как русская. Если не каждый русский писатель — пророк в полном смысле слова (как Пушкин, Лермонтов, Гоголь, Достоевский) то нечто от пророка есть в каждом, живет по праву наследства и преемственности в каждом, ибо пророчесвен самый дух русской литературы. И вот поэтому — древний, неколебимый закон, неизбежная борьба пророка с его народом, в русской истории, так часто и так явственнно проявляется.¹⁸

Even if we do not except Chodasevič's conclusion that a poet cannot be appreciated until and unless he is sacrificed and that a nation carries out some act of ritual sanctification in destroying its most valuable members (an idea similar to the masochism Gippius detected and deplored in Vološin) we can still understand the seriousness with which he viewed the situation in Paris. In "Podvig" Chodasevič appears as the defender of the younger generation against the philistine critics of *Sovremennye zapiski* who reprimand the young poets for their "unynie". As most of his observations on the dire position of these writers is familiar from other sources we do not need to repeat them. What is important here is the degree to which Chodasevič identifies the future of Russian literature as a whole with the fate of the younger generation: recalling in a certain way Gippius' and Poplavskij's ideals for the emigration:

Если лишенные не только приятного, но и самого необходимого, молодые писатели наши все еще трудятся, все еще ведут неприметную, но упорную борьбу за свое литературное существование, то иначе, как подвигом, я этого назвать не могу.... Если эти ростки будущей русской литературы вынесут, вытерпят, не погибнут до наступления лучших времен, — это будет чудо. И тогда придется признать, что всем, обязаны они только самим себе, ибо помощь, внимание, участие, им оказываемые со стороны, совершенно ничтожны. А между тем, делают они не только русское дело, но и самое важное сейчас из возможных дел. Это именно они, порою почти не видевшие России, порою мало образованные, мало сведущие, все же берегут русскую культуру.... Если эмиграция даст зачать молодую словесности, она не выполнит главного и, может быть, единственного своего назначения. Но и в этом случае будущий историк с любовью и удивлением преклонится перед подвигом тех, о ком я говорю: перед талантливими и бездарными, перед умными и неумными одинаково, ибо в доброй, в благой, в прекрасной воле своей они все равны.¹⁹

If in general the “*budušij istorik*” tends to sympathise with Chodasevič, there are times when he must be on his guard against his moments of self-indulgent pessimism. As we have pointed out, for all his wisdom, Chodasevič produced little poetry himself during the time of these articles. Furthermore his historicism often got the better of him, forcing him to make premature judgements of his contemporaries. Such is the case with the last article we will consider, “*Literatura v izgnanii*”. Writing in 1933 Chodasevič is already to declare that the high point of émigré letters was around 1926-1927. While mostly arguing that there is no theoretical reason why a literature cannot exist and develop in exile, citing the Polish and Hebraic traditions, Chodasevič is sceptical about the Russians. Like Gippius and Poplavskij he thinks that émigré literature is “*nedostatočno émigrant-skaja*”. This explains the reason for the lack of contact between the two generations, as the older is still clinging to its past it cannot provide any guidance for the younger which will turn increasingly to non-Russian literature for inspiration and models. Having tried to defend émigré literature against its critics, Chodasevič ends with a gloomy prediction, based on the declining numbers of publishing houses and journals and the lack of interest among the émigrés as a whole for serious literature:

Повидимому, эмигрантская литература, какова бы она ни была, со всеми ее достоинствами и недостатками, со своей силой творить отдельные вещи и с бессилием образовать нечто целостное, в конечном счете оказалась все же не по плечу эмигрантской массе. Судьба русских писателей — гибнуть. Гибель подстерегает их и на той чужбине, где мечтали они укрыться от гибели.²⁰

Ironically, this particular theme of imminent “*gibel*” is almost wholly absent from the work of Jurij Mandel’shtam, whose fate was the most disastrous of all the authors we have discussed. Born in Moscow in 1908, Mandel’shtam emigrated with his family to Paris where he completed his education, first at the Russian gymnasium then at the Sorbonne. Well known for his erudition and familiarity with, aside from Russian, French, German and English literature, Mandel’shtam contributed poetry and criticism to a number of émigré journals. A convert to Orthodoxy he attended the meetings of “*Zelenaja lampa*” and the Sunday salon of the Merežkovskijs, as well as participating in the pro-Chodasevič “*Perekrestok*” group. Replacing Chodasevič as literary critic for *Vozroždenie* in 1939 Mandel’shtam remained in Paris after the occupation. In 1942 he was arrested by the Gestapo for breaking the

curfew and was subsequently deported to Germany where he died in a concentration camp.²¹

Although certainly aware of the disintegration of the world around him, Mandel'stam even to a higher degree than Chodasevič, appears to have been able to maintain a belief in the durability of human culture. It is this aspect of his work, as found in his critical essays and his book *Iskateli*, rather than his poetry, which we will examine.²²

Perhaps because of his association with Chodasevič, Mandel'stam's approach to literature is primarily historical, however, we soon find some major differences between them. While Chodasevič stresses the importance of the Russian classical heritage as received from Puškin, Mandel'stam is more interested in the transmission of European ideas through history, combining literary scholarship with a personal religious philosophy.

In one of the first essays for the *Žurnal sodružestva* (published in Vyborg, then part of Finland)²³ Mandel'stam attempts to characterise the poetry of his generation. Written at the same time as Chodasevič's article "Literatura v izgnanii", Mandel'stam's "O novoj poëzii" offers a different perspective on the same issues. Whereas Chodasevič allows himself to indulge in the spectacle of a decaying civilisation and the sacrifice of young poets at the hands of Philistine émigrés, Mandel'stam looks for signs of life where they can be found. In comparing Chodasevič with Mandel'stam we must not forget that severely as he criticised the Symbolists, Chodasevič still belonged to their world, and objectively as he might have tried to write about the past and the present he could only see the cultural efforts of the emigration as a pale reflection of the Golden and Silver Ages. As a child of the emigration Mandel'stam suffers from no regrets for a lost world, nor does he judge his contemporaries by an unrealistic standard. For him the period of the Symbolists is not a personal memory but a historical movement now long finished. For Mandel'stam what is significant is not so much the quality of the poetry written by the younger generation, but that poetry should be written at all. Even so he maintains that they have been able to originate a new approach to poetry which derives from the experience of the catastrophe they have lived through:

Но одно дело тот или другой поэт, его индивидуальное, более или менее значительное, творчество, а другое дело новое лицо современной поэзии. Не раз мне приходилось слышать — что все создаваемое в этой области здесь — только перемены старого и индивидуальные различия ничего не меняют. Но, повторяю, события начала века не могли пройти для совре-

менного человека бесследно. А поэт в первую голову должен быть человеком, иначе вся его работа сведется к внешнему мастерству, в конечном счете стоящему немного. Внимательно следя за книгами стихов, вышедшими за несколько последних лет...можно, мне кажется, уловить симптомы именно новой поэзии, нового восприятия мира, себя, происшедших катастроф-восприятия, общего, несмотря на все коренные различия, ряду русских эмигрантских поэтов.²⁴

In the rest of the article Mandel'stam goes on to describe the leading features of this new poetry and new understanding of life, which is contrasted with the experience of the older generation:

Это восприятие пережитых нами событий сближает новых поэтов с их непосредственными предшественниками, составляет как-бы преемственную связь между двумя поколениями. Но если для старших современников катастрофа представляется надвигающейся, непостижимой, непонятной — нынешнее поколение ее уже пережило, вернее, продолжает переживать. Для него она — существующая реальность, с которой надо считаться каждую минуту и которую — несмотря на весь ужас — надо принять и пережить до конца. В своем падении современный человек должен достичь дна....И вот обрушившаяся на нас „арктическая ночь“ уже не представляется поэту, ни неодолимым, незаслуженным бедствием, ни все уничтожающим и потому желанным забвением. Она воспринимается, как тяжелый, но необходимый искус, который надо пройти родившемуся на нашей земле человеку...Это отношение к жизни, к страданиям и даже к смерти, как к некоему сужденному нам опыту и является, по моему, второй, уже вполне оригинальной чертой современной поэзии. Опыт этот нам самым еще не понятен....Но мы знаем, что отказать от этого пути нам нельзя, что это — единственный путь. Всякое желание избежать его трудностей — ничто иное, как простое закрывание глаз. Ведь никакое временное облегчение, никакое случайное разрешение все равно нас не удовлетворят, не уничтожат того, что раз открылось нашим глазам.²⁵

In a later article Mandel'stam also distinguishes between the younger generation and the middle (Chodasevič, Georgij Ivanov, Adamovič) but for the present we can see how deeply someone like Mandel'stam wanted to find meaning in the confusion of modern history. His belief in poetry and the pursuit of an underlying purpose distinguishes Mandel'stam from either Poplavskij or Adamovič, with their anti-cultural ethics, or Chodasevič with his preoccupation with formal decadence. If anything, Mandel'stam's position is closest to Gippius', but we shall also see how similar it is to Anatolij Štejger's. In concluding this article Mandel'stam makes an observation in passing which will be the foundation of his book of historical études *Iskateli*. Commenting on the "vnutrennij krizis čelovečeskogo soznanija" which is reflected in all

the poetry of the younger generation, Mandel'stam says that much as this crisis has been caused by the drastic changes in the external world, one can also say that perhaps it is this inner crisis itself which has brought about these upheavals.²⁶

For Mandel'stam poetry is a constructive, creative force even when only recording emotions of protest. The superiority of a poet to his epoch and to his own fate is referred to in one of Mandel'stam's articles which quotes directly from Chodasevič. In "Sud'ba poëta" of 1935 Mandel'stam reiterates the theme of "Krovavaja pišča" the stoning of Russia's poet-prophets by her people, however, where Chodasevič sees only the passive suffering of the poet, Mandel'stam discerns another element at play:

Но не только в одном этом трагедия поэта, и не только русского. Не только внешние условия — голод, нищета или пуля противника приводили поэтов к гибели. Была и, вероятно, всегда будет какая-то обреченность в них самих, обреченность сознательная и, как бы, заранее ими принятая.²⁷

It is precisely this understanding of the "tragičeskaja suščnost' poëzii" which Mandel'stam finds lacking in the work of the middle generation. In his review of the anthology of émigré poetry *Jakor'* (1936, compiled by Adamovič and M.L. Kantor) Mandel'stam, after paying respectful tribute to the senior poets such as Bal'mont, Bunin, Gippius and Vjačeslav Ivanov, has this to say about the middle generation poets:

Что-то...со всеми ними случилось, стряслось, в каждом из них кроется какая-то порочность, неблагополучность, м.б. даже и трагедия. Это их отнюдь не уменьшает, но, сознаемся, что не та трагичность, которая возвеличивает.²⁸

In discussing the work of Cvetaeva, Chodasevič, Georgij Ivanov and Adamovič, Mandel'stam begins to turn the tables; if the older generation could voice its disappointment in the younger for not producing a Blok or an Annenskij then the younger could make the same objection about them. About Chodasevič he writes: "Poët podlinnyj, no nikak ne 'arion russkoj èmigracii'. Ne budem šutit', èto nastojaščaja tragedija. Ne potomu li Chodasevič (vremenno ili okončatel'no) perestal pisat' i pečatat' stichi."²⁹ He turns his attention to Georgij Ivanov, whose poetry suffers for other reasons:

Настоящая поэзия со всеми ее волшебством. Но и Иванов отравлен: слишком сладки иногда его звуки, чтобы стать до конца трагическими. Может быть, немного отделяет Иванова от „ариона“, но преграда непреодолима. Наше время проще, жестче, страшнее. У Иванова и страш-

ное становится сладким, слишком сладким. Сам Иванов сказал как-то про себя: „наследие декаденства“. Увы — он прав, а декаденство не современно, да и в вечном плане — не предел.³⁰

Finally, Adamovič's poems are described as “ne napisany, a tol'ko zadumany”, to this Mandel'stam adds: “Dekadenstvo bol'she, čem u Ivanova no net preobražajuščej muzyki. Adamovič — dekadent rassuditel'nyj.”

For all his criticism of these poets, Mandel'stam is not less demanding of his own contemporaries, however, considering the circumstances in which they have lived he is proud of their successes. His highest praise is reserved for Štejger and Poplavskij, despite their obvious differences:

Еще несколько лет тому назад имя Анатолия Штейгера было совсем неизвестно, м.б. и сейчас его не все знают, а между тем среди зарубежных поэтов он один из самых значительных, у него свой голос, и свой опыт. А с опытом только и начинается поэзия... Покойный Борис Поплавский был поэтом чистой воды, все в нем говорило не только о литературном необычайном таланте (он из зарубежных поэтов был самым одаренным), но и о человеческой значительности.³¹

Like most of his fellow émigré poets and critics Mandel'stam lived in anticipation of discovering a great talent who would become a worthy successor to the Russian tradition. While this did not prevent him from judging his contemporaries' work with equanimity he obviously hankered after more brilliant eras of human civilisation. This inner restlessness, both spiritual and artistic, which can be considered characteristic of all the émigré writers, becomes the key, according to Mandel'stam, for understanding the geniuses of all periods. Recalling his previous statements that the upheavals of the twentieth century are possibly the result of an internal crisis in humanity and also that poets are as much creators as victims of their fates, we are not surprised that Mandel'stam should have written his article on Pascal and his book *Iskateli* even in such years as 1937 and 1938. Much as his studies owe something both to Chodasevič's historicism and to the popular Russian tradition of “Bogoiskatel'stvo”, Mandel'stam's freedom of method and catholicity of interest take him beyond the reach of either of these influences. In “Perečityvaja Paskalja” (1937) Mandel'stam reflects on the duality of Pascal's *Pensées*; their ability to burn as well as to heal:

Паскаль не может быть „настойной книгой“. Настойная книга — это „спокойные“ философы (Эпиктет, которого так чтит сам Паскаль, Марк Аврелий). Это также поэты, хотя бы и самые страшные, самые тревожные... С поэтами можно жить постоянно — такова таинственная природа

поэзии. Но как держать на столе, дольше какого то времени, паскалевские „Мысли“? Они прожгут и стол и человека — не как огонь, а скорее как кислота, действующая медленно, но совершенно неотвратимо.³²

For Mandel'stam the strength of the *Pensées* lies in their fragmentary lyricism, in their lack of a rational, cerebral philosophy. The paradoxical effect of Pascal on his readers Mandel'stam attributes to Pascal's own belief that while we appear to seek peace we in fact desire struggle: “...Iz dvuch protivopoložnych instinktov v duše roždaetsja smutnoe soznanie, kotoroe zastavljaet nas stremit'sja k pokoju čerez volnenie.”³³

Mandel'stam's interest in the psychology of genius finds its fullest expression, however, in *Iskateli* (1938). Here he has gathered together a wide variety of names from (chronologically) Dante to Rilke. Although he begins and ends with poets he also includes Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, along with Stendhal and Kleist. What unites all these figures is the fact that while they are regarded as disruptive influences on the ordinary course of human society, their ultimate contribution is always beneficial. With the exception of Napoleon, whom he discusses in relation with Goethe and Beethoven, Mandel'stam does not refer to political or martial leaders; his cult of greatness is of the spiritual order and has no place for the exercise of physical violence. Perhaps with the contemporary policies of Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia in regard to culture in mind, Mandel'stam remarks on the temptation of conventional societies to suppress the inspired:

Платон хотел изгнать поэтов из своей идеальной республики. Не следует ли и впрямь поступить так со всеми „Мечтателями, чудаками и авантюристами?“ Возможно, что такое решение и приняли бы „здравомыслящие“, если бы не заметили, что без этих опасных искателей не существовала бы и та самая культура, которой они по земному преданы. Не странно ли? Человек взрывает фундамент, на котором стоит здание, но здание стоит именно до тех пор, пока он не прекратит своей разрушительной работы. Или то, что кажется разрушением, и есть подлинное сожидание, а все наши прогрессы и строительства без этой погони за тенью превращаются в бесплодные попытки, кончающиеся крушением? Ничего не поделаешь: повидимому, уничтожить „мечтателей“ мы не можем.³⁴

While Mandel'stam states that his criteria are metaphysical, he also insists that individual minds must be allowed to carry out their particular line of enquiry:

Каждый ищет его по своему, даже не помня его звука — и каждый по своему находит и не находит одновременно. Свобода полная — и вместе с тем

один единственный возможный выход. В этом — основная и неизбежная трагичность поисков. Чем свободнее, тем ужаснее и радостнее. Парадокс? Может быть. Но на этих путях наши законы уже не действительны, все претерпевает таинственное изменение. Паскаль и об этом помнил, когда писал в своих „Мыслях“: „Христианство странно“.³⁵

Although Mandel'stam does not include directly any Russian poets in this volume he does refer to Puškin and Lermontov as representatives of these aspirations in the foreword. For all his emphasis on European thinkers, Mandel'stam hardly needs to mention Russians as his reading of all the others is already imbued with the ideals of Russian Symbolism. Writing on Rilke he says:

Как и всякий подлинный художник, Рильке, так упорно работавший над стихом...смысл поэзии видел не в мастерстве. Больше, чем кто либо, он не отделял поэзию от жизни — поэзия была для него „экзистенциальная“, подобно тому, как „экзистенциальная“ философия для некоторых мыслителей. „Я не хочу отделять искусство от жизни, — писал он. Я знаю, что во всякое время и при любых обстоятельствах у них один и тот же смысл.“ Стихи — способ „вплотить то, чего еще нет, но что должно быть“, одна из возможностей духовного освобождения.³⁶

As we have had occasion to remark before, the two generations in Paris were more often than not in agreement, especially when facing a common enemy. In 1939, a year after the above was written, Gippius and Merežkovskij undertook the publication of a „svobodnyj sbornik“ in the interest of arresting the increasing apathy and desperation amongst the intellectual émigrés.³⁷ Offended as she had always been by the restrictions of the émigré press, Gippius wanted to give the younger generation the opportunity to write at liberty, in particular essays of length rejected by most other editors. From the table of contents alone we see that the pre-occupations of the older and younger generation, even at this late date, had not diverged from the ones they began with e.g. Adamovič, „O samom važnom“; Jurij Terapiano, „Žizn“; Jurij Mandel'stam, „O ljubvi“; Lidija Červinskaja, „V poslednjuju minutu“; Vladimir Zlobin, „Čelovek v naši dni“, etc. Naturally, of course, the tone here is darker than it ever was, but there is also a certain defiance of fate and the events of political history. Gippius herself, who only wrote the introduction to this *Literaturnyj smotr*, expressed this attitude more directly in one of her last articles before the outbreak of war, „S cholodnym vnimanijem“ (*Novaja Rossiya*, 12 June 1939). For Gippius there can be no discussion of politics without reference to ideas; political freedom derives only from an understanding of metaphysical

freedom. In the following we see how Gippius could draw on her experience as both a convinced Symbolist as well as émigrée:

Рост „Метафизики отсутствия“ начался уже давно. Людям совсем наивным, не могущим отделить слова „метафизика“ отчего-то смутно-отвлеченного, парадоксальным покажется утверждение, что вся реальная тяжесть наших дней, круг реальнейших событий, — все это, в громадной степени, исходит из болезни, заразившей человечество, — метафизической пустоты является ее *следствием*. Просто-зрителю, в потоке событий активно не участвующему (а таково положение русской эмиграции:, не трудно в этом убедиться....³⁸

The essential idea of Symbolist poetics, that there is a correspondence between higher realities and words used in language becomes Gippius' mode for criticising both the régimes of Hitler and Stalin, as well as all other political thinkers who work only one plane. What the distortion of Puškin's Russian was to Chodasevič, the general perversion of language in the modern world was to Gippius; the source of countless evils:

„Метафизики отсутствия“, как я говорю, делает свое дело незаметно и аккуратно. Она, прежде всего, выедает понятие из его оболочки — слова. Все слова на лицо; но если это лишь пустые оболочки — почему не играть ими, как угодно? Почему ложь не называть правдой (и обратно) миром — войну, почему слово „честность“ исключает замышление измены? Почему не звать рабство — свободой, власть сталинской опричнины — в зависимости момента — коммунизмом, или народовластием, демократией? Нет никакой причины: ведь никто за слова свои не отвечает, — перед кем отвечать?³⁹

Gippius' refusal to cease asking questions, her inherent idealism and her belief that the émigrés could learn the importance of freedom, even if only in literary journals, never failed. That there was an enduring link between her first efforts as a Symbolist poet and her last outcries and that she was understood by her youngest contemporaries there can be no doubt. As Mandel'stam says in his last review for the *Žurnal sodružestva*:

Эмигрантская поэзия, с собственными темами, со своим, пускай, не ярким стилем, существует и составляет звено, соединяющее эпоху символизма с будущим. Явление ее таким образом вполне оправдано и очень важное.⁴⁰

PART THREE

THE POETRY OF POPLAVSKIJ AND ŠTEJGER

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

As research into the literature of the Russian emigration continues, it is only natural that attention will shift from the general aspects of the subject, such as the problems of bibliography and the location of material, to the specific: the analysis of the lives and works of individual writers. In the process, perhaps such concepts as the Paris School and Paris Note might be discarded as unnecessary hindrances to our reading of the works of a particular poet. As we have seen, several critics of the period have already assumed that, even if these concepts were in effect at one time, they were harmful to the poets in question and need not concern us as a way of approaching them from the present. Valid as such a purist attitude may be in principle, it can lead to as much misunderstanding of an author as an overly historical or social one. As the history of émigré literature has shown, only those writers such as Gippius, Chodasevič or Cvetaeva, who had established themselves before the Revolution as highly individualistic poets, were able to continue working more or less independently in exile and have, perhaps as a result of this, received widespread interest and scholarship. In contrast, it has been virtually impossible to treat the poets of the younger generation in this manner; not only is their work of smaller quantity, but also many of them had their lives cut short just at they reached a certain level of maturity. To ignore the fact that they were almost entirely dependent on the Paris émigré world for their existence as writers, from the background of their work to the possibilities of being published, does not render them a favour, particularly as they considered themselves to be as "émigré" as their elders, and as having no other home than Paris.

Having collected in parts One and Two some of the leading elements of the Paris School mentality, I shall try in this final part to demonstrate how they positively influenced the poetry of Poplavskij and

Štejger, and how the creation of the Paris Note was a natural result of the particular situation in which the younger émigré poets found themselves.

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CHAPTER I

POPLAVSKIJ'S POETRY

As a chronological reading of his criticism shows, Poplavskij appears to have turned in his later articles from his original openly provocative manner to more reasoned and sober lines of argument. The fundamental paradoxes remain, but more of an effort is made to communicate with the reader. We have seen that he was even willing to abandon his favourite idea of the need to perish, replacing it with a call to stoicism and self-preservation. In a similar fashion many critics of Poplavskij's poetry have argued that his second volume of poems, *Snežnyj čas*, represents a major transition in his character and art from his first volume *Flagi*, although there is no agreement on the nature or the value of this transition. While two of Poplavskij's contemporaries, Jurij Mandel'stam (in 1936) and Nikolaj Tatiščev (in 1947), as well as Hélène Ménégaldo (in 1981) have considered that *Snežnyj čas* is a work of greater maturity, showing also a mastery of form and technique, Simon Karlinsky has consistently (1967, 1973, 1980) viewed *Snežnyj čas* as a decline from the daring Surrealism of *Flagi*, which he sees as a result not of any inner spiritual crisis, but as a surrender to the prevailing influence of the Paris Note. Before we examine these opinions in detail and the way they relate to our understanding of Poplavskij and the concepts of the Paris School and Paris Note, we will look first at the background of Poplavskij's career as a poet and then at these two volumes themselves.

Whatever distinction one might wish to make between Poplavskij's work and that of his confrères in terms of style and world-view, the history of the publication of the various volumes of his poetry could not be more typical of the emigration as a whole. Not only did three of these volumes appear posthumously (*Snežnyj čas*, 1936; *V venke iz voska*, 1938; *Dirižabl' neizvestnogo napravlenija*, 1965), but the first, *Flagi*, was printed in Estonia without Poplavskij's numerous corrections to the proofs. Though the Berkeley edition of 1980 has included the necessary corrections, Poplavskij's distress at the time was great, as was the confusion of his readers and critics, many of whom were reading Poplavskij

for the first time. (Before 1931 a number of his poems had been published in *Volja Rossii*, *Sovremennye zapiski*, and the first volumes of *Čisla*.) Although Poplavskij did not live to see the publication of *Snežnyj čas*, we know that the order in which the poems are arranged is his own and that he intended them for publication, advantages this volume has over the remaining two.¹

Even though *Flagi* was his first collection of poetry we can regard it more as the culmination of an earlier stage of Poplavskij's development, rather than as a portent of things to come. Poplavskij himself, who was twenty-eight when it was published, underlined its retrospective character by arranging the poems chronologically from 1923 to 1930, the year in which he, together with many of the other younger émigrés, threw himself into the formation of *Čisla*. In this context the controversy around the apparently sudden change in Poplavskij's work in the period 1931-1935 is considerably simplified: for both internal and external reasons Poplavskij could not, after *Flagi*, continue to write in the same way.

What then are we to make of *Flagi*? In her thesis *L'univers imaginaire de Boris Poplavsky*², Hélène Ménégaldado adopts Poplavskij's belief that a poet's work is inseparable from his life and the rest of his personality. Working with a variety of material by Poplavskij such as his diary, poetry, novels and essays, (which are treated indiscriminately as accurate sources of information about him), Ménégaldado tries to reconstruct, with the aid of theories by Baudelaire, Jung, Lévi-Strauss, Breton and Bachelard, Poplavskij's "univers imaginaire". Successful as this method may be in bringing us closer to Poplavskij as a person and a thinker, it ultimately undermines the integrity of his artistic work and our ability to read his poems as individual creations. Undoubtedly Poplavskij believed at times that he was, to use Chodasevič's expression, "vyše iskusstva", but in the end we are still left with works of art, which will only survive if they are considered on their own merits, regardless of the role they might have played in Poplavskij's private cosmology. Without abandoning entirely Ménégaldado's investigations into such subjects as the relation between Poplavskij's use of drugs and his search for spiritual perfection, we will try to show what might still be gained by reading volumes like *Flagi* and then *Snežnyj čas* not in terms of establishing the poet's "mythe personnel" but in the context of the period and in the light of contemporary literary criticism.

Poplavskij is often described as the first and last Russian Surrealist poet and *Flagi* as his most Surrealistic collection. As even the most cur-

sory reading shows, this applies only to the character of the imagery and the evocation of a dream-like world in which there is a total suspension of spatial relations and ordinary causality. As far as elements of form and technique are concerned, however, *Flagi* could not be more conventional and un-Surrealistic, belonging clearly to the standard Russian verse tradition; regular iambic and trochaic metres being grouped into quatrains with few exceptions. Although this conventionalism makes the poems easily readable it does not make them more comprehensible.

Fortunately, within *Flagi* there are two groups of poems which seem to make some concession either to the reader's "culture générale" or to our familiarity with the principal themes of Poplavskij's criticism. In the first group, which we will not examine, are such poems as: "Don-Kichot", "Arturu Rembo", "Gamlet", "Detstvo Gamleta", "Rozy Graalja" and "Homage à Pablo Picasso". In the second are: "Lunnyj dirižabl'", "Rukopis', najdennaja v butylke", "Žalost'", "Žalost' k Evrope", "Rimskoe utro", and "Stoicizm". Naturally, as these poems have survived and were published by Poplavskij himself, we cannot expect to find in them reflections of one of Poplavskij's most severe positions, the complete rejection of art in the name of ascetic mysticism or Christian altruism; otherwise they would not exist in the first place. In "Lunnyj dirižabl'", however, we have a lyrical exposition of another of Poplavskij's favourite themes, the delights of self-destruction:

ЛУННЫЙ ДИРИЖАБЛЬ

Я хочу Тебя погубить,
Я хочу погибающим быть,
О прекрасной гибели душ
Я Тебе расскажу в аду.

Строит ангел дворец на луне,
Дирижабль отходит во сне.
Запевают кресты винтов,
Опадают листья цветов.

Синий звук рассекает эфир,
Приближается мертвый мир.
Открывается лунный порт,
Улыбается юный черт.

И огромная в темноте
Колоннада сходит к воде
В синих синих луны лучах
Колоннады во тьме звучат.

В изумрудной ночной воде
Спят прекрасные лица дев,
А в тени голубых колонн
Дремлет каменный Аполлон.

Зацветают в огне сады.
Замки белые всходят как дым,
И сквозь темно синий лесок,
Ярко темный горит песок.

Напевают цветы в саду.
Оживают статуи душ.
И как бабочки из огня
Достигают слова меня.

Верь мне, ангел, луна высока,
Музыкальные облака
Окружают ее, огни
Там звучат и сияют дни.

Синий ангел влюбился в весну.
Черный свет отойди ко сну.
Прозябание полюби,
Погибание пригуби.

Тихо смотрит череп в окно.
В этой комнате совсем темно,
Только молча на самом дне.
Тень кривая спит на стене.

1928 (*Флаги*, 42-43)

In keeping with the "metalogical" principle of Surrealist poetry we do not have a development of the theme as such, but rather a series of images which are linked by the repetition of certain objects or qualifiers, and which relate to the general subject. Thus the various expressions: "otchodit vo sne" (6), "opadajut listy" (8), "približaetsja mertvyj mir" (10) repeat without reference to each other the same idea of the process and motion of destruction as stated in the first stanza. In this case, of course "destruction" is the wrong translation for this conception of dying as a pleasant experience associated with sleep and dreams of a magic world. Only in the last line is the effect ruined by the image of the skull at the window looking in on what remains of the self after it has embarked on its lunar voyage.

Although we cannot possibly call Poplavskij's poetry didactic, we know from a literary "enquête" which we discuss later, that Poplavskij did wish to convey a specific vision or experience through his poems. As we also know from his article "O mističeskoj atmosfere molodoj literatury v èmigracii" Poplavskij associates visionary powers with those who are perishing and that whatever they have to say can only be contained in a letter "otpravlennoe po neizvestnomu napravleniju". That the final message is "o prekrasnoj gibeli duš" we learn from the poem "Rukopis', najdannaja v butylke", which directly follows "Lun-nyj dirižabl':

Мыс Доброй Надежды. Мы с доброй надеждой тебя покидали,
Но море чернело, и красный закат холодов
Стоял над кормою, где пассажирки рыдали,
И призрак Титаника нас провожал среди льдов.

В сумраке ахнул протяжный обеденный гонг.
В зале оркестр запел о любви невозвратной.
Вспыхнул на мачте блуждающий Эльмов огонь.
Перекрестились матросы внизу троекратно.

Мы погибали в таинственных южных морях,
Волны хлестали, смывая шезлонги и лодки.
Мы целовались, корабль опускался во мрак.
В трюме кричал арестант, сотрясая колодки.

С лодкою за борт, кривясь, исчезал рулевой,
Хлопали выстрелы, визги рвались на удары
Мы целовались, и над Твоей головой
Гасли ракеты, взвиваясь прекрасно и даром.

Мы на пустом корабле оставались вдвоем,
Мы погружались, но мы погружались в веселье.
Розовым утром безбрежный расцвел водоем,
Мы со слезами встречали свое новоселье.

Солнце взошло над курчавой Твоей головой,
Ты просыпалась и пошевелила рукою.
В трюме, ныряя, я встретился с мертвой ногой.
Милый мертвец, мы неделю питались тобою.

Милая, мы умираем, прижмись же ко мне.
Небо нас угнетает, нас душит синяя твердь.
Милая, мы просыпаемся, это во сне.
Милая, это не правда. Милая, это смерть.

Тихо восходит на щеки последний румянец.
Невыразимо счастливыми души вернутся ко снам.
Рукопись эту в бутылке, прочти, иностранец,
И позавидуй с богами и звездами нам.

(Флаги, 44-45)

Unlike "Lunnyj dirižabl'" this poem follows a fairly straight forward narrative structure and does not employ the usual Surrealist devices. The effect, however, is much the same, a *Todeslied* with a touch of the grotesque. Once again we are in a world of continuous motion even if it is towards disaster. This recalls our first piece of criticism by Poplavskij, "Zametki o poëzii", where he states that poetry must partake of the dynamic "Dionysian" principle.

In the poem "Žalost' k Evrope" the theme of imminent disaster is carried out on a large scale, recalling Poplavskij's "political" article on the fate of Europe and Russia, "Sredi somnenij i očevidnostej":

ЖАЛОСТЬ К ЕВРОПЕ

Марку Слониму

Европа, Европа, как медленно в трауре юном
Огромные флаги твои развеваются в воздухе лунном.
Безногие люди смеясь говорят про войну,
А в парке ученый готовит снаряд на луну.

А солнце огромное клонится в желтом тумане,
Далеко далеко в предместьях газ запылал.
Европа, Европа корабль утопал в океане,
А в зале оркестр молитву на трубах играл.

И все вспоминали трамваи, деревья и осень.
И все опускались грустя в голубую пучину.
Вам страшно, скажите? Мне страшно ль? Не очень!
Ведь я европеец! смеялся во фраке мужчина.

Ведь я англичанин, мне льды по газетам знакомы.
Привык подчиняться, проигрывать с гордым челом,
А в Лондоне нежные леди приходят к знакомым.
И розы в магазинах вянут за толстым стеклом.

А гений на башне мечтал про грядущие годы.
Стеклообразные здания видел вдали,
Где ангелы люди носились на крыльях свободы,
Грустить улетали на солнце с холодной земли.

Там снова закаты сияли над крышами башен,
Где пели влюбленные в небо о вечной весне.
И плакали — люди на утро от жалости страшной
Прошедшие годы увидев случайно во сне.

Пустые бульвары, где дождик упав и уставши
Прилег под забором в холодной осенней истоме.
Где умерли мы для себя ничего не дождавшись
Больные рабочие слишком высокого дома,

Под белыми камнями в желтом холодном рассвете
Спокойны как годы, как тонущий герцог во фраке,
Как старый профессор летящий в железной ракете
К убийственным звездам и тихо поющий во мраке.

(Флаги, 70-71)

In *Flagi*, however, the sense of urgency which we find in Poplavskij's articles is wholly absent. In this case, even if Europe is running out of time it does so without any real drama taking place. For all their verbs of motion the poems of *Flagi* only offer us floating images where we never feel we truly depart or arrive. In the same way, although we are given titles for the majority of the poems whatever idea they contain repeats itself without development or direction. In many of the poems, such as "Žalost' k Evrope" this vagueness extends as far as the lyric self who seems to be dissolved into his own vision. Before presenting two of the most Surrealistic and enigmatic poems of *Flagi*, we look at another of those which has a relation to one of the essays.

СТОИЦИЗМ

В теплый час над потемневшим миром,
Желтоносый месяц родился,
И тотчас же выстиранный с мылом,
Вдруг почувствовал: осень, сад.

Целый день жара трубила с башни,
Был предсмертный сон в глазах людей.
Только поздно улыбнулся влажно
Темноалый вечер чародей.

Под зеленым сумраком каштанов
Высыхал гранит темнолиловый,
Хохотали дети у фонтана,
Рисовали мелом город новый.

Утром птицы мылись в акведуке,
Спал на голых досках император.
И уже средь мрамора и скуки
Ад дышал полуденный с Евфрата.

А над замком под смертельным небом,
Распростерши золотые крылья,
Улыбалась мертвая победа
И солдат дремал под слоем пыли.

Было душно. В неудобной бане
Воровали вещи, нищих брили.
Шевеля медлительно губами
Мы в воде о сферах говорили.

И о том, как отшумев прекрасно
Мир сгорит, о том, что в Риме вечер,
И о чудной гибели напрасной
Мудрецов детей широкоплечих.

Насмехались мокрые атлеты,
Разгоралась желтая луна
Но Христос склонившийся над Летою
В отдаленье страшном слушал нас.

В море ночи распускались звезды,
И цветы спасались от жары,
Но уже проснувшись шли над бездной
В Вифлеем индусские цари.

И слуга у спящего Пилата
Воду тихо в чашу наливал,
Центурион дежурный чистил латы
И Иосиф хмуро крест стругал.

1930
(*Флаги*, 26-27)

It is poems like this which make us hesitate to label Poplavskij as a Surrealist poet, for aside from the mildness with which he uses Surrealist devices, there is present in "Stoicism" a religious sentiment wholly alien to the ideals of the French Surrealists. As we know from other sources if Poplavskij was at home in any world, it was in this period of transition between classical and Christian culture when metaphysics were a universal preoccupation and the mystery religions were at their height. If in some of the essays and poems Poplavskij indulges in the fantasy

of personal and worldwide annihilation, then in others he interprets the surrounding catastrophe as the possible occasion for new revelations, the death wish giving way to a sense of excitement and anticipation. As part of his eschatology Poplavskij believed that art must be hermetic, as he says of the emigration in "Čelovek i ego znakomye": "...ibo žizn' ee ne na sobranijach i ne v peredovyh stat'jach, a tam že, gde i vsjakaja žizn': v družeskom krugu, v malo ponjatnoj ee polurukopisnoj literature...".

To summarise our impressions of *Flagi*: first of all we cannot help noticing the uninventiveness of the versification of this poetry, which relates to their entire construction. Rather than finding a tight "fugal" structure where there is a counterpoint between rhythm and metre and which we have come to associate with the best tradition of Russian poetry, and where each word is indispensable, we are left with an accumulation of single lines which could multiply indefinitely. Even in those poems which have a guiding idea there is neither a point of departure nor arrival. Secondly, as all the poems share the same kinds of images and adjectives, based mostly on unusual combinations of colours, there is a certain sense of interchangeability amongst the poems. The unity thus obtained in *Flagi* is based not on the relation of distinct parts to the whole, but on the seemingly arbitrary repetition of indefinite images, the predominant one being the association of sleeping, dying and dreaming. As a result of this concentration on visual effects, the worth of individual words and language as a whole is sacrificed and few lines can be remembered on their own. Eventually the strangeness of the world of *Flagi* defeats its purpose; if at first the reader is surprised or disturbed by its Surrealism, he begins to lose interest as the same devices of *épatage* repeat themselves. The complete divorce from external reality and the lack of any real drama in the "events" which take place preclude the reader's identification with the lyric hero who is himself barely present. Altogether the goal of *Flagi* does not consist in the transmission of specific feelings or emotions but in the effort to escape from the harsh outlines and concreteness of reality into a world of liquid colours and weightlessness.

Before we consider the relation between *Flagi* and *Snežnyj čas* two contemporary reviews of *Flagi* should be mentioned, one by T. Štil'man and the other by Georgij Ivanov. The review by Štil'man emphasises the dream-like aspect of *Flagi* without making any reference to Surrealism, thus the various images are judged strictly according to the logic of traditional metaphors. The reviewer, who is generally favourable

towards Poplavskij, cannot help commenting in this regard: "...popadajutsja u Poplavskogo obrazy gromozdkie i bessmyslennye, vrode 'ijul', kak Faust na kentavre"; no razve možno obvinjat' čeloveka v tom, čto emu snitsja bessmyslica?" Štil'man also notes how, even though the poet refuses to live on this earth and turns to dreams as an alternative, the dreams themselves are often simply a more grotesque version of earthly life. The review mentions the near absence of the lyric hero and ends with the regret that the obviously rich talent of Poplavskij is not put to more serious uses: "Poëzija Poplavskogo v nekotom smysle lučšaja; no ona — 'lučšaja iz mjuzik-chol'nych trupp' i grečeskie tragedii ej ne k licu."⁴ Although reference to Greek tragedy seems somewhat inappropriate, it does remind us of the primary requirements of the Paris School, that poetry be more than colourful and musical, which is ironically what Poplavskij believed he was doing.

In his review, which appeared in *Čisla* in 1931, Georgij Ivanov also omits any mention of Surrealism as an influence on Poplavskij. In fact he is inclined to disregard the imagery of *Flagi* altogether. Citing the numerous instances in which contemporary critics have been mistakenly overwhelmed by the novelty of a young poet's work, Ivanov warns himself and the readers of Poplavskij not to be overly impressed by the external qualities of *Flagi*, which along with all poetical devices he considers unimportant:

Если из поэтического опыта последней четверти века можно сделать полезный вывод, то вывод этот, конечно, тот, что все внешние „достижения“ и „завоевания“ есть нелепость и вздор, особенно в наши дни, когда поэзия повинуюсь приказу:

...Останься пеной Афродита
И слово в музыку вернись

стремится, — почти до самоуничтожения — сделать свою метафизическую суть как бы обратно пропорциональной ее воплощению в размерах и образах.⁵

In defending the view of the Paris School, Ivanov seeks for the real strength in Poplavskij's poetry behind the flow of amorphous images and decides it lies in the evocation of the passage from the conscious to the unconscious, from life to death. He deliberately pays Poplavskij the compliment of comparison to Belyj and early Blok, but with the qualification that if we admire early Blok now it is only because we know how he developed after such poetry as "Stichi o Prekrasnoj Dame".

As in *Flagi* the poems of *Snežnyj čas* are arranged chronologically, from 1931 to 1935 as directed by Poplavskij himself. Here, however, the resemblance between the two volumes ends. Although a definitive assessment of the transition between them would have to include a point by point comparison, we only have to read a few poems of *Snežnyj čas* to realise their general divergence from the poetry of *Flagi*. It is not a question of a change in Poplavskij's motives for writing poetry, for we know that he never abandoned his belief that poetry must seek to convey an experience of mystical reality, but a change in the means of expressing this experience. Once this is understood the apparently arbitrary decision of Poplavskij not to continue with surrealist techniques, as evinced by *Snežnyj čas*, should come as no surprise, especially if, as we have reason to believe, he was also rethinking some of his earlier philosophy. Without entering into an analysis of Poplavskij's spiritual life, which is certainly not within the aims of this work, we will still try to show how in *Snežnyj čas* Poplavskij was able to fulfill his own requirements for poetry as well as those of the ordinary reader.

The two most notable features of *Snežnyj čas* are the definite presence of the lyrical self and some form of external reality, usually a landscape. This more deliberate use of the lyric self and nature is never allowed to become merely representational or anecdotal, but serves rather, to support and define an emotion or mood which, as ever, relate to a metaphysical position. Thus, in the first poem of *Snežnyj čas*, which establishes a programme for the volume, while the self and nature are present in a way unthinkable in *Flagi*, their external attributes are kept to a minimum:

Снег идет над голой эспланадой;
Как деревьям холодно нагим,
Им должно быть ничего не надо,
Только бы заснуть хотелось им.

Скоро вечер. День прошел бесследно.
Говорил; измучился; замолк,
Женщина в окне рукою бледной
Лампу ставит желтую на стол.

Что же Ты, на улице, не дома,
Не за книгой, слабый человек?
Полон странной снежною истомой
Смотришь без конца на первый снег.

Все вокруг Тебе давно знакомо.
Ты простил, но Ты не в силах жить.
Скоро ли уже Ты будешь дома?
Скоро ли Ты перестанешь быть?

Декабрь 1931
(*Snežny čas*, 9)

In one way or another most of the poems of *Snežnyj čas* take after this one, to the time of year and even to the time of day, *entre chien et loup*, whose traditional associations of disquiet and ambiguity seem to have suited Poplavskij particularly well. While some poems concentrate more on a characterisation of the lyric self, whether in the first person or second, others omit the lyric self entirely allowing the surrounding scene to express the mood of the poet. As an example of the first case is "V čas, kogda pisat' glaza ustanut":

В час, когда писать глаза устанут
И ни с кем нельзя поговорить,
Там в саду над черными кустами
Поздно ночью млечный путь горит.

Поздно, полно. Ничего не надо.
Нечего за счастье упрекать,
Лучше в темноте над черным садом
Так молчать, скрываться и сиять.

Там внизу, привыкшие к отчаянью,
Люди спят, от счастья и труда,
Только нищий слушает молчание
И идет неведомо куда.

Одиноко на скамейке в парке
Смотрит ввысь, закованный зимой,
Думая, там столько звезд, так ярко
Освещен ужасный жребий мой.

Вдруг забывши горе на мгновенье,
Но опять вокруг голо, темно
И, прокляв свое стихотворение,
Ты закроешь медленно окно.

1931
(*Snežnyj čas*, 53)

We might note that this is one of the few cases in which Poplavskij portrays himself as a poet; as we know this is consistent with his desire to

avoid as much as possible the usual trappings of literary life. Even here he reminds us how easily he passed judgement on his work. In the following poem the self is all but absorbed by the landscape, only being implied by the infinitive constructions in the third stanza:

Вечер блесит над землею,
Дождь прекратился на время,
Солнце сменилось луною,
Лета истаяло бремя.

Низкое солнце садится
Серое небо в огне;
Быстрые, черные птицы
Носятся стаей в окне.

Так бы касаться, кружиться,
В бездну стремглав заглянуть,
Но на земле не ужиться,
В серое небо скользнуть.

Фабрика гаснет высоко,
Яркие, зимние дни.
Клонится низко осока
К бегу холодной волны.

Черные, быстрые воды
Им бы заснуть подо льдом.
Сумрачный праздник свободы
Ласточки в сердце пустом.

1931

(*Snežnyj čas*, 15)

Although we might regret the loss in *Snežnyj čas* of the fluidity and colourfulness of *Flagi* we can see that the introduction of physical reality provides these poems with a unity and a structure lacking in the earlier volume. While the identification of a certain mood with a definite time and place might restrict the number of possible images and the use of "metalogue" as allowed by Surrealism, we are assured in the end of obtaining a distinct impression of at least one of the poet's emotions. This return to conventional lyric poetry is accompanied by an influence from Russian sources; Lermontov and Tjutčev being heard particularly clearly in this poem:

Ранний вечер блестит над дорогой.
Просветлело и дождь перестал,
Еле видимый месяц двурогий
Над болотною речкою встал.

Неприветлива чаша сплошная.
Где-то стрелочник тронул свирель.
Осыпает ворона ночная
С облетающих кленов капель.

Слышен лай отдаленный собаки,
У ворот в темноте голоса.
Все потеряно где-то во мраке,
Все в овраге лишилось лица.

Ночь. Бездонная ночь над пустыней,
Исполинов сверкающих мать,
В тишине, Ты не плачешь над ними,
Не устанешь их блеску внемать.

Буду в ярком сиянии ночи
Также холодно ярком над всем.
Если я на земле одиноче
Дальных звезд, если так же я нем

Выпью сердцем прозрачную твердость
Обнаженных, бесстрашных равнин,
Обреченную, чистую гордость
Тех, кто в Боге остались одни.

1931-1934
(*Snežnyj čas*, 33-34)

The mythical image of a nocturnal destructive being will return at the close not only of the whole volume but also of the cycle "Nad solnečno-ju muzykoj vody", which is rather surprising as these poems are generally based on images of light and well-being. Different as the emotions of this part may be, the structure of the poems is identical to that of the first part. Once again the opening poem defines the tone of the cycle:

Не говори мне о молчаньи снега.
Я долго спал и не был молодым,
И вдруг очнулся здесь, когда с разбега
Остановился поезд у воды.

Смерть глубока, но глубже воскресенье
Прозрачных листьев и горячих трав.
Я понял вдруг, что может быть весенний,
Прекрасный мир и радостен и прав.

И все, о чем мы говорили в поле,
На мокрый хлеб поваленный глядя,
Все было где-то на границе боли
И счастья долгожданного дождя.

Еще в горах, туманной полосой
Гроза скрывает небо за собой,
Но рядом за песочною косою,
Уж ярко солнце встретилось с водой.

Мгновенно отозвавшись счастьем новым,
Забыв о том, чем мучила зима,
Она довольна голубой обновой,
До края неба гребнями шума.

Сияет жизнь, она близка к награде,
Свой зимний труд исполнивши любя,
И все вокруг одна и та же радость,
Что слушает во всем и ждет себя,

С ленивой улыбкой молчаливой,
В кустах, где птицы говорят с Тобой,
Читая так, Ты кажешься счастливой,
И радостью Твоей блестит прибор.

И в ней бродячим кажется цветком
Мороженщик под зонтиком линиялым,
И парусник за низким маяком
Уходит, уменьшаясь в небе талом.

1932

(*Snežnyj čas*, 77-78)

As in the previous poem nature is depicted in both topographical detail, creating a "historic" background of reality, and in symbolic terms according to the conventions of the pathetic fallacy. It is these poems, in particular, with their emphasis on a human love that tempt one to make a connection between the poet's biography and his artistic evolution. Convenient as this may be, it is far too simplistic. As we have seen, Poplavskij was perfectly capable of expressing his most introverted sentiments in a similar fashion; the increased rôle that nature plays in his

poetry can tell us something definite only about a change in his attitude towards art, not to life. As final evidence of the underlying aesthetic of *Snežnyj čas* we can compare one of his most "optimistic" poems, which gives its first line as a title to the cycle, with the last one, the most fatalistic of the whole volume. While the appearance of the landscape in the second is more symbolical than identifiable, recalling again the elemental landscapes of Tjutčev (e.g. his poems "O čem ty voeš", *vetr nočnoj*", 1836, and "Smotri, kak na rečnom prostore", 1850) the figure of the poet is just as vivid and concrete as in the first.

Над солнечною музыкой воды,
Там, где с горы сорвался берег в море
Цветут леса и тает белый дым
Весенних туч на утреннем дзоре.

Я снова встал душой из зимней тьмы
И здесь в горах за серою агавой,
Который раз мне здесь раскрылся мир
Мучительной и солнечной забавой.

В молчаньи на оранжевую землю
Течет смола. Чуть слышный шум влады
Напоминает мне, что море внемлет
Неспешно покрывая край земли.

Молчит весна. Все ясно мне без слова,
Как больно мне, как мне легко дышать.
Я снова здесь. Мне в мире больно снова,
Я ничему не в силах помешать.

Шумит прибой на телеграфной сети
И пена бьет, на улицу спеша,
И дивно молод первозданный ветер —
Не помнит ни о чем его душа.

Покрылось небо темной синевою,
Клубясь, на солнце облако нашло
И, окружась полоской огневою,
Скользнуло прочь в небесное стекло.

В необъяснимом золотом движеньи,
С смиреньем дивным поручась судьбе,
Себя не видя в легком отраженьи,
В уничижении, не плача о себе,

Ложусь на теплый вереск, забывая
О том, как долго мучился, любя.
Глаза, на солнце греясь, закрываю
И снова навсегда люблю Тебя.

1934

(*Snežnyj čas*, 89-90)

Мать без края: „быть или не быть“,
Может быть послушать голос нежный
Погасит лучи и все забыть,
Возвратить им сумрак ночи снежной.

Мать святая, вечная судьба.
Млечный путь едва блестит. Все длится.
Где-то в бездне черная труба
Страшного суда не шевелится.

Тихо дышат звездные хоры.
Отвечает мать больному сыну:
Я — любовь, создавшая миры,
Я всему страданию причина.

Состраданье — гибель всех существ.
Я — жестокость. Я — немая жалость.
Я — предвечный сумрак всех естеств,
Всех богов священная усталость.

Спи, цари. Я — рок любви земной,
Я — почин священных повторений,
Я — вдали под низкою луной
Голос вопрошающий в сомненьи.

О, герой, лети святым путем,
Минет час, ты рок богов узнаешь.
Я же с первым утренним лучем
В комнате проснусь, что ты не знаешь.

Улыбнусь. Рукой тетрадь открою,
Вспомню сон святой хотя б немного
И спокойно, грязною рукою
Напишу, что я прощаю Бога.

Сон о счастье. Газ в пыли бульвара,
Запах листьев, голоса друзей.
Это все, что встанет от пожара
Солнечной судьбы. Смирись, ничей.

1935

(*Snežnyj čas*, 105-106)

Before returning to some more of Poplavskij's own criticism for confirmation of our belief that the transition from the Surrealism of *Flagi* to the naturalistic lyricism of *Snežnyj čas* was both conscious and artistically motivated, we will examine various opinions by others on this question.

In his review of *Snežnyj čas* (1936) Jurij Mandel'stam, as did all who knew Poplavskij personally, finds it difficult to dissociate the memory of the recently deceased poet from his work, considering him to be one of the most talented and original poets of the emigration. This does not prevent him, however, from pointing out the weakness of *Flagi* in comparison with *Snežnyj čas*:

И все таки „Флаги“ мне не казались окончательной удачей. Большинство стихотворений были как то разжижены, наполнены строчками приблизительными и часто они то и составляли почти все стихотворение, терявшее свою форму и свою внутреннюю ценность.⁶

As did Georgij Ivanov and T. Štil'man in their reviews, Mandel'stam makes no reference to Surrealism, interpreting the change in imagery as a result of some inner crisis on the part of the poet. For Mandel'stam the two most notable aspects of *Snežnyj čas*, which he considers as altering Poplavskij's style, are a certain sense of humility and an interest in life and natural phenomena:

Поплавский внутренне резко изменился и если не поэтически то духовно и душевно сильно созрел и углубился. Несмотря на поверхностное сходство со своими старыми стихами, он говорит в „Снежном часе“ совсем другим тоном — более сосредоточным, более трезвым, сознательным и главное — более смиренным.... Для Поплавского воскресла земная жизнь... воскресла природа. Он увидел не условно декоративный пейзаж его прежних стихов, а живой лесной или приморский.⁷

Altogether, Mandel'stam concludes, Poplavskij was on the eve of a complete conversion from his earlier decadence at the time of his death, to which *Snežnyj čas* testifies.

Ten years after this review Nikolaj Tatiščev, one of Poplavskij's closest friends and keeper of his archive, wrote an article which tries to explain Poplavskij's creative evolution. Rather than opposing *Snežnyj čas* to *Flagi*, as sharply as we have done, Tatiščev sees the second as gradual development from the first and in several statements includes them both. Again the term Surrealism is not applied to *Flagi* and only appears at the end of the article when he points out that unlike the Surrealists Poplavskij did not publish any pieces of automatic writing,

apparently taking years to re-write certain poems. (The dating of several poems in both volumes confirms this.) According to Tatiščev, Poplavskij's method consisted in allowing images and words to arise spontaneously which would then be carefully arranged to produce the poem as a whole. In this account, however, Tatiščev does not make a distinction between those images which arise from within the imagination and those which are clearly suggested from without. Thus, in discussing the title *Snežnyj čas*, Tatiščev mentions how excited Poplavskij would become at the sight of snow falling and how snow forms the central element of this volume, without commenting on the fact that the reality of the natural phenomena in *Snežnyj čas* mark a complete break with the invented world of *Flagi*. Like Mandel'stam, Tatiščev considers the restraint and serenity of *Snežnyj čas* to be the outcome of some inner struggle leading, however, not to a new creative period but possibly to a renouncement of poetry:

Так запутанность снов проясняется, загадка индивидуального существования становится все более ясной. Поэт подходит к тому пределу, где эстетика заменяется этикой, служение красоте — жалостью к людям, и где надо прекратить писать стихи. Пора совсем отказаться от поэзии, да, и этот дар надо преодолеть....Музыка преодолена. Последние стихи сжаты, обнажены, голы, без декораций, словесных и иных. Все, что было им столько раз мучительно обдумано, взвешено на внутренних весах, тысячу раз на разные лады повторено, все самое личное, тайное, скрытое, вдруг стало общим: родился новый, вполне индивидуальный звук. Углубляясь в полученные даром, но еле уловимые детали, он дошел до конца и в мучениях родил свою поэтическую личность.⁸

If the first reviews and criticism of Poplavskij err by their lack of distance and inability to consider such points as the influence of Surrealism on Poplavskij, Simon Karlinsky's various articles and introductions to his work tend to overstate Poplavskij's Surrealism and his debt to French literature. Rather than considering Poplavskij as a member of the Paris School, Karlinsky stresses his isolation in Paris. In his article of 1967 "Surrealism in Twentieth-Century Russian Poetry: Churilin, Zabolotskii, Poplavskii", Karlinskij tries to place Poplavskij, almost exclusively of any other influence, in the context of European Surrealism and its relation to such Russian groups as the Futurists, who were most open to it. Although he admits that Poplavskij and Zabolockij probably did not know of each other's work and derive their Surrealism from different sources, Poplavskij from the French, Zabo-

lockij from Chlebnikov, he draws parallels between their two careers particularly in terms of their abandonment of Surrealism:

Both poets chose to give up their surrealistic imagery in the early 1930's—Poplavskii out of deference to the Parisian school of fashionable existential angoisse that became dominant in the émigré literature at that time. His two later collections, *Snežnyi čas* (1936) and *V venke iz voska* (Paris, 1938), attest to his genuine mystical experience and were praised for that reason by his literary associates. As poetry these books are often amorphous and at times simply dull... Around 1934 we see both Zabolotskii and Poplavskii almost willingly trying to give up the most distinctive and personal features of their poetic personalities (trying unsuccessfully—but the similarity of ideological pressures so similarly exercised in such diverse environments is noteworthy). Two years after Poplavskii's senseless and tragic death Zabolotskii's ordeal by labor camps began.⁹

Karlinsky repeats his uncritical praise of Poplavskij's Surrealism as well as his facile comparison of the exigencies of Soviet and émigré literary life in the 1930's in his essay "In search of Poplavsky" (1977) and in his introduction to the Berkeley edition of Poplavskij's poetry (1980). Again we are told that, "...Boris Poplavsky was in a sense a very fine French poet who belongs to Russian literature mainly because he wrote in Russian" (1977)¹⁰ and that, "Except for the fact that he wrote in Russian, he would quite naturally take his place in the succession of poètes maudits..." (1980)¹¹ In these two pieces, however, Karlinsky does make mention of those two aspects of Poplavskij, his early career as an art student and his life long interest in painting, and his preoccupation with religious philosophy and mysticism, which will allow us to question both the validity of his considering Poplavskij as a "French" or Surrealist poet and his assumption that the poetry of *Snežnyj čas* was a surrender to the dictates of the émigré cultural establishment.

Like Karlinsky Hélène Ménégaldo in her thesis *L'univers imaginaire de Boris Poplavsky* (1981) tries to discuss Poplavskij's work independently of the Paris context and in relation to French Surrealism. She is on the whole more cautious both in terms of assessing the rôle of Surrealism in his poetry and the importance of Surrealism in general. As far as Ménégaldo is concerned, Poplavskij only selected those aspects of Surrealism which appealed to his search for new ways of expressing his inner experiences and visions, ignoring almost entirely the specific ideology of the Surrealist movement with its interest in psychoanalysis, radical politics and rejection of mysticism and any form of traditional religion. After quoting two of Poplavskij's pieces of automatic writing whose technique would seem to conform with that of the Surrealists she says:

Ces deux textes nous permettent d'imaginer ce qu'aurait pu être un Poplavsky surréaliste, pleinement intégré au mouvement poétique français de son époque. Mais ceci demeure une vue de l'esprit car, si Poplavsky emprunte aux surréalistes leur méthode d'investigation de l'inconscient, il est en désaccord avec eux sur un point essentiel: le mystère qu'il recherche est transcendant, alors que pour Breton et ses amis, le mystère est immanent et gît au coeur de chaque objet. Ainsi Poplavsky, sans doute à cause de son appartenance au néo-symbolisme russe, reste-t-il un témoin à la charnière de deux époques: il est un symboliste fourvoyé dans l'expérience surréaliste.¹²

In general Ménégaldo agrees with Tatiščev that *Snežnyj čas* represents an improvement over *Flagi* and quotes from the same passages in his article that we have. True to her method of analysing images according to the idea of a "mythe personnel" she does not make any distinction in her interpretation between the naturalistic landscapes of *Snežnyj čas* and the purely imaginary ones of *Flagi*. She accounts for the differences in the two volumes by turning to his biography: "Il semble que, renonçant aux beautés parfois trop formelles de *Flagi*, Poplavsky évolue vers une poésie lyrique où trouvent place les grands problèmes métaphysiques — en particulier le problème des rapports de l'homme avec Dieu — ce qui correspond à une évolution parallèle dans la vie intérieure du poète."¹³ In her introduction to the second part of her thesis "Reflexions préliminaires sur les rapports entre le symbole et l'image poétique" Ménégaldo offers a more sophisticated explanation for the *Flagi* / *Snežnyj čas* transition, which aside from crediting Poplavskij with an artistic consciousness also underscores some of the weaknesses of Surrealism:

En un mot, quels sont les critères de la justesse d'une image? Il nous paraît difficile de chercher ces critères dans la définition même de l'image, ou dans l'analyse d'images isolées. L'image psychiquement et poétiquement authentique s'articule avec d'autres images de même qualité pour créer un ensemble — le poème — régi par une logique intérieure qui lui est propre. Toutes ces images participent harmonieusement à l'élaboration d'une atmosphère bien particulière, qui est l'univers imaginaire d'un poète. Pour nous, le critère fondamental est donc la non-contradiction des images entre elles, qui fait que les interrélations des images sont justifiées et accessibles à l'esprit du lecteur.

C'est donc la structure de l'univers poétique que nous cherchons à saisir. Nous espérons pouvoir montrer que les images de Poplavsky ne sont pas arbitraires, que leur évolution correspond à un changement parallèle dans le monde intérieur du poète et n'est point dictée par un pur souci d'esthétisme.

Signalons enfin un danger qui guette le poète, lorsque celui-ci fait un usage abusif de l'image: c'est de deviner l'esclave de l'image, désormais incontrôlable: "il en va des images surréalistes comme de ces images de l'opium que l'homme n'évoque plus, mais qui "s'offrent à lui, spontanément, despotiquement. Il ne

peut pas les congédier; car la volonté n'a plus de force et ne gouverne plus les facultés". (Breton, *Manifestes du Surréalisme*) Aragon caractérisait le surréalisme par "l'emploi déréglé et passionnel du *stupéfiant image*". L'image est alors une drogue, et l'artiste, dont l'esprit est envahi, débordé par ce déferlement sur lequel il n'a aucune prise, risque de devenir un faiseur d'images, ou, plus grave encore, de perdre la raison.

Cette tentation, Poplavsky y'a succombé à l'époque de *Flagi*. Familier de la doctrine surréaliste et des paradis artificiels, il a provoqué en lui ce "dérèglement de tous les sens" qui se traduit par un dérèglement de la fonction symbolisante et par "l'épanchement du rêve dans la vie réelle". Mais *Snežnyj čas*, nous le verrons, apporte la preuve d'une maîtrise plus grande, d'une reprise en mains de "l'anarchique troupeau" des images.¹⁴

As we have tried to show, the assumption that the change which occurs in Poplavskij's poetry is the result either of some inner spiritual crisis, or of external pressure, undermines any consideration of Poplavskij as a professional artist in control of his medium. To some extent Poplavskij himself furthered the first view as he believed art had no meaning on its own. However, by virtue of his publishing any work at all, not to mention the great care he took over the actual writing and arranging of his poetry, Poplavskij must be regarded first of all as a professional poet, even if *malgré lui*. In order to settle this question of the transition from *Flagi* to *Snežnyj čas*, and to reveal Poplavskij's essential artistic integrity, we will return once more to some of his criticism in *Čisla*.

As Ménégaldo confirms throughout her thesis Poplavskij's concern in writing poetry was to communicate some mystical vision and that Surrealism was only used as a means to this end. As she also points out, Surrealism as such can easily lead to a state of acute confusion where the poet becomes intoxicated with his own imagination and ceases to have any relation with an audience. The ambivalence of this form of artistic creation which can obscure as much as it seeks to reveal is perfectly described by Poplavskij himself in his response to a literary *enquête* in *Čisla* in 1931. To the question: "Čto vy думаete o svoem tvorčestve?" he replied:

Размышление о собственном „творчестве“ всегда вызывает во мне чувство стыда и досады. Кажется мне, что я еще ничего не сказал о „заветном“ а все ходил вокруг да около, пытаюсь разъяснить и приспособить что-то. И все потому, думается мне, „что я недостаточно храбр“.

„Я всегда пытался найти способ существования, который позволил бы мне выразиться с абсолютной свободой“, писал Джойс. Для меня же это предаться во власть стихии мистических аналогий, создавать некие „загадочные картины“, в которых известным соединением образов и звуков

чисто магически вызывали бы в читателе ощущение того, что предстояло мне.

Сочинительство мое есть постоянная борьба со страхом, но страх „безвоздушности“ будучи превозможенным и „левое“ произведение написано, на остальную жизнь вовсе не остается храбрости. Малейшие литературные столкновения повергают меня в глубокое уныние. Занятие литературой все мучительнее и втайне от себя все время ищу исхода из нее — в религиозной философии или в истории религий.

Но, думается мне, не есть ли религиозная философия для меня род „халтуры“ высшего порядка, и измены мистическому „присутствию“. Измены высшей, труднейшей жизни, в наказание за которую к литературному Дон-Жуану приходит Каменный Гость — духовная смерть. Литературная халтура всех аспектов, всякая уступка публике есть измена духовной муке, расплата за которую — окаменение и каббалистическая смерть. Так между страхом духовной смерти и страхом публики, сознание доходит до глубочайшего отвращения от литературы, но нет успокоения и исхода и надо жить безысходно. Но только бы выразить, выразиться. Написать одну „голую“ мистическую книгу, вроде „Les chants de Maldoror“ Лотреамона и затем „assommer“ несколько критиков, с отвратительным удвоением жизни реальной и описанной. Сосредоточиться в боли. Защититься презрением и молчанием. Но выразиться хоть в единой фразе только. Выразить хотя бы муку того, что невозможно выразить.¹⁵

In the end we know that Poplavskij's inner state did not develop noticeably from what is expressed here; what we do have evidence of is the abandonment of the desire to create „zagadočnye kartiny“ which require on the part of both reader and poet a belief in mystical analogies, and the need to *assommer*.

In the same issue of *Čisla* (No.5) we have one of Poplavskij's longest and most serious articles on painting. As Karlinsky stresses, Poplavskij himself had studied painting and remained *au courant* with developments in contemporary art, both Russian émigré and European, adopting, as Karlinsky maintains, some of the visual intensity of the Surrealist painters for his own poetry. In „Okolo živopisi“, however, Poplavskij reveals an interest in the history and theory of visual art which extends beyond the contemporary scene in Paris. Furthermore, unlike most of his writing on poetry and literature, this article presents a concise and positive approach to artistic creativity, which is viewed not as a compromise of the spiritual, but as its fulfillment. Although we can only speculate on the reasons for Poplavskij's more generous treatment of painting than poetry, it is important in terms of our perception of him and his work to remember that he could discuss problems of artistic creation in a professional way. Again, it is not a question of

sacrificing a spiritual dimension for a material one, but of discerning how art realises the spiritual through material media.

Poplavskij begins his article, which will end with a review of a current exhibition by émigré artists, with a brief discussion of the mentality behind ancient Egyptian and Assyrian sculptures, which do not represent the real but the ideal through stylization and a certain deformation of the actual. This Poplavskij takes as the standard for all art, especially that which tries to depict nature:

Как будто мир полон остановившихся, замерших по дороге к реализации ощущений природы, которая как бы не смогла выявиться до конца. Остановилась, не осилив сопротивления материи....И вот художник пытается помочь природе закончить, выявить обессилевшие тенденции. Художник деформируя пытается заканчивать недоделанное витальным устремлением.¹⁶

Poplavskij then analyses how the artist uses the various laws of composition to achieve this realisation of the inner form of things. More important to Poplavskij, of course, is the painter's overall attitude to art, his "*esprit*":

Здесь входит нечто бесконечно важное, что французы называют "*esprit*" живописи, что я перевожу „устремленность“ ее. Столь важное, что можно вполне сказать, что только талант это *вообще ничего*. *Esprit* художника есть пластическое выражение всех его идей, всех его мечтаний и верований, и даже в очень большой мере его жизни, а главное большее или меньшее отношение к искусству, как к чему-то священному и молитвенно важному.¹⁷

For Poplavskij two things can destroy this exalted state: success, which returns the artist back to the mere representation of surface beauty, and the imitation of a school of painting without an understanding of its original meaning. In describing the way the younger generation of painters have slowly had to free themselves from the influence of Cubism, Poplavskij does not criticise the Cubist movement as such but its lifeless imitation. Considering everything that has been said about Poplavskij's Surrealism, we might interpret these remarks as possibly related to his own experience:

Когда умирает душа какого-нибудь пластического движения, наследие его приемов быстро становится препятствием и часто даже роком последующей эпохи, против которого и должно с трудом выявляться его особое видение мира.

Так теперь, когда „душа кубизма“ умерла окончательно, приемы кубиз-

ма и кубистическое воспитание нового поколения художников есть как бы расплата за яркое и эфемерное его цветение.

Не место здесь говорить о душе кубизма, об этих долгих мучительных поисках идеальной „интелегибельной“ формы всех вещей. Но телом кубизма, основным пластическим его приемом был „принцип декорации“ отчего большинство молодых художников сложившихся в 1914-1923 гг. несут яд декоративности в крови. И только медленно, подобно больному борющемуся с инородной жизнью в себе, преодолевают они свое первое эстетическое воспитание, часто создавая, увы! пестрое и не совсем живое искусство.¹⁸

Whom then does Poplavskij hold up amongst his contemporaries as model artists; not the Surrealists, but Braque, Modigliani and Matisse, whom he praises for their indefatigable labour and devotion to their art. Poplavskij reserves his deepest veneration, however, for two masters of the historic and recent past, Rembrandt and Cézanne:

Все борения, все отчаяние, все поиски самого главного, также как все благополучие и поиски развлечения отражаются на холсте. И не только красивее, но в тысячу раз глубже и серьезнее взор художника, и не очаровательность, а трагизм мира, гибельность и призрачность его, смерть и жалость открываются нам глазами Рембрандта. У большинства же молодых художников „маленькие глаза“, они подшучивая „делают живописи“ подобно тому, как некоторые французы „делают любовь“.

Вопрос об *Esprit* яснее всего в примере Сезанна. Конечно Сезанн был все не так уже блестяще живописно одарен, как Рафаэль или Ренуар, но как высока „сфера“ Сезанна над сферой Ренуара и даже Рафаэля. Секрет этого в огромной боли Сезанна, и в том что он был подвижником и с меньшими способностями, но неизмеримо превосходящей душой, вошел на несомненное, великое, бессмертное, первое место. Сезанн титан и гений, Ренуар красивый художник, почти „*petit maître*“ дистанция неизмеримая.¹⁹

While we cannot pretend to explain all the vagaries of Poplavskij's poetry and aesthetics by references to his criticism, it has seemed as wise a means of discussing his work as that adopted by Karlinsky or Ménégaldo. Not only do we gain an idea of the range and freedom of Poplavskij's interest in art from these articles, but we also realise that his general attitude to creativity was not as negative as might be gathered from his early essays. We have, of course, only discussed a part of Poplavskij's work, leaving aside his novels and journal, as well as his posthumously published poetry; however for a writer whose inner world was undoubtedly highly complex, these remarks on Rembrandt and Cézanne offer another way of approaching his work. For whatever reason Poplavskij seemed to have greater respect for painting than for

poetry, however as his later essays show, this more mature side of him began to extend to his other fields of interest. To read the poetry of *Snežij čas* in this light does not invalidate entirely the positions of Karlinsky and Ménégaldo, but allows us, at least, to place greater importance on Poplavskij's artistic judgement and freedom of action. That the change in Poplavskij's work towards the end of his life was more in keeping with the aesthetics of the Paris Note does not compromise this independence, for not only do we see the possible sources for disillusionment with Surrealism in his criticism, but we also know how great a hand Poplavskij had through his contributions to *Čisla* in creating that émigré atmosphere and poetics which Karlinsky believes thwarted him.

CHAPTER II

THE POETRY OF ANATOLIJ ŠTEJGER

No discussion of the Russian literature of Paris would be complete without mention of the poetry of Baron Anatolij Štejger. If Poplavskij has received the credit for inventing the term "Paris Note" (even if he did not always adhere to it) then Štejger is universally considered to be its chief exponent. Unfortunately, such consensus on the part of émigré literary critics and historians does not necessarily help us to understand either the "Note" or Štejger's poetry; behind the repetition of statements about his poetic orthodoxy is concealed a certain disinclination to analyse his work in detail. Once again the fault lies with Adamovič, whose critical memoirs of Štejger, for want of any other equivalent material, have become the foundation of what little has been written about him. Before we look at Adamovič's memoirs and its after-effects, and attempt our own interpretation, it will be useful to give a brief account of the main facts of Štejger's life and career as a poet.

A descendant of an old Swiss family, a branch of which had settled in Russia in 1815, Anatolij Štejger was born in 1907 on his father's estate in the Ukraine, near Kiev.¹ His father, Baron Sergej Ėduardovič, was a leading member of the local nobility and had served as an assistant to the governor-general of Odessa, Count Musin-Puškin, accompanying him on a diplomatic mission to Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria after the death of Alexander III. In 1913 he became a member of the Duma, having brought his family to St. Petersburg in the previous year. The Štejgers spent most of the Revolution in the south of Russia and with the fall of Odessa in 1920 they fled first to Constantinople then to Czechoslovakia. In 1931 the Štejgers moved to Switzerland having discovered that they were eligible for Swiss citizenship.²

In his incomplete memoirs, which have unfortunately been published without his family's permission, Štejger gives a vivid portrait of his childhood from his earliest recollections until the evacuation from Odessa.³ What is significant in these memoirs is Štejger's interest in conveying a variety of details and his awareness of the complicated lives of the adults around him. Writing many years later (c.1941) he is able to

evoke the original perceptions of a child without the interference of adult retrospection. Not only do these memoirs provide us with a background to Štejger's life in exile, from his "aksakovskij" infancy to his two trips to St. Petersburg in 1912 and 1913, but also with a major theme of his poetry, the betrayal of the child's world by that of the adult.

In 1927 Štejger left Czechoslovakia, where he had been at the Russian school in Moravská Třebová (Mährisch Trübau), for Paris, remaining there from 1927 to 1929. In 1928 his first volume of poetry *Étot den'* was published in Paris.⁴ In 1932 his second volume appeared, *Éta žizn'*, which includes poems written at Moravská Třebová and Kreuzberg (Switzerland). From 1934 to 1935 we know from his correspondence with Zinaida Šachovskaja that he lived in Nice, mostly for the sake of his tuberculosis which forced him, after trips to Brussels, Berlin and Prague, to stay at a sanatorium in Switzerland from June 1935 to November 1936.⁵ It is to this period that his correspondence with Marina Cvetaeva belongs.⁶ In June 1936 Štejger published the last volume of poems which would appear in his life time, *Neblagodarnost'*. After a brief stay in Paris at the end of 1936 Štejger spent the rest of the years before the war travelling, mostly in the Balkans and around the Mediterranean, arriving in Bessarabia in August 1939. With the outbreak of war Štejger returned to Switzerland where he completed his last volume of poetry, *Kathēmerinē* (1941), which has never been published separately as Štejger incorporated most of these poems in a retrospective collection, $2 \times 2 = 4$, which was published in 1950 and reprinted in 1982.⁷ Between 1941 and 1944, the year of his death, Štejger apparently wrote no poetry, although he did contribute some anti-Nazi articles to Swiss newspapers; his last being a notice about the German advance into Russia in the region where the Štejgers had lived, "Die Eintreibung in Kanijew" (*Der Bund*, 11-2-1944).⁸

Despite the many obvious differences between Poplavskij and Štejger, it does not seem wholly unreasonable to make comparisons between them. Aside from the fact that their work is situated entirely in the 1920-1940 period both poets have received little scholarly treatment until recently. As we noticed with Poplavskij, while émigré critics have relied mostly on memoirs for their interpretations, non-émigré critics have resorted to comparisons with other schools of literature, French Surrealism in the case of Poplavskij, and Acmeism in the case of Štejger. While we cannot deny the validity of these approaches we must beware of their limits and seek alternative ones when available. In our

chapter on Poplavskij's poetry we tried to show the importance of reading his poems in the light of his critical essays and contemporary reviews by others. Unfortunately, Štejger himself wrote no criticism, on which we could base a similar reinterpretation, which requires us to make more use of Adamovič's memoirs than we would like and to turn to his correspondence with Zinaida Šachovskaja, the only one published as of the present.⁹ We might add in this regard that the letters from Marina Cvetaeva to Štejger are almost useless from our point of view; not only have none of Štejger's letters survived, but Cvetaeva's attitude to him and his poetry reveal little but her own preoccupations and difficulties at the time.

The main problem with Adamovič's article "O Štejgere, o stichach, o poëzii i o pročem" is not that he lacks insight or interesting ideas, but that he fails to develop them and makes no effort to reconcile various contradictions.¹⁰ He begins his "zametki", which inevitably cover far more than a discussion of Štejger, by commenting on the difficulty of judging young talent. In the case of Štejger it would appear that Gippius, Chodasevič and Georgij Ivanov were all rather sceptical about his future as a poet, considering his first volume of poems to be too light and impersonal.¹¹ Fortunately Štejger was able to find his own voice, according to Adamovič, by his preoccupation with personal experience, in particular the experience of pain and suffering. He suggests that the intensity of Štejger's "igol'čato-ranjaščij" style derives itself directly from this original sensation and self-concentration, also declaring that a poet who only records or depicts pain without trying to overcome it is not capable of becoming a great poet.¹² Further on, however, he recalls how he used to argue with Štejger on the dangers of "ostroumie" in poetry, which Adamovič considered to be as harmful as "razvjanost'"':

Штейгер постоянно со мной из-за него (остроумие) спорил, а если и уступал, то нехотя, будто отказываясь от чего то ему дорогого, — и отнажды с торжеством принес мне том Жуковского, где нашел такие слова:

„Мечтательность, дар воображать, остроумие, тонкая чувствительность — вот истинные качества стихотворца“.

Едва ли однако Жуковский отстаивал остроумие в нашем, теперешнем значении, т.е. как остроумничание, юмор, игру слов, и значит, в конце концов уподобление стихотворения анекдоту: он сам в поэзии своей был слишком от этого далек. Вероятно он имел в виду „острый ум“, т.е. сознательность вдохновения, сотрудничество рассудка с чувством, вплоть до взаимного контроля.¹³

As any reading of his poetry should make clear Štejger himself understood Žukovskij's definition in precisely the way Adamovič implies he did not. We can only suggest at this stage that for reasons of his own Adamovič did not wish to concede that Štejger was in fact a poet who believed in the cooperation of intellect and feeling "vplot' do vzaimnogo kontrolja". The only influence he received from Žukovskij, so Adamovič maintains, was a "pečat' melancholii"¹⁴, Adamovič adds to his ambiguous treatment of Štejger by recalling that even though Štejger took apparently no interest in questions of versification he was a master of finding the necessary place for the necessary word, this however is in turn criticised as being no substitute for the formal skills of versifying. The only unqualified praise Adamovič manages to render Štejger is his almost complete lack of imagery and metaphor which sets classical Russian poetry apart from spoken Russian.¹⁵ Two final points of Adamovič's article are worth mentioning as they reveal his basic misunderstanding of Štejger. First of all he notes that, unlike most Russian writers, Štejger never seemed to be troubled by the question "Začem pisat' stichi?", however, Adamovič does not wish to pursue the subject: "No lučše na nem ne zaderživat'sja, inače ne uceleet ničego."¹⁶ The only explanation he offers for Štejger is that he was young. He also does not seem to have understood Štejger's persistent interest in the cultural life of Petersburg before the Revolution. Aside from the fact that Štejger did have vivid memories of Petersburg, albeit those of a child, Adamovič assumes that Petersburg merely represented some kind of lost paradise for Štejger, with no more significance than his own nostalgia for the Paris of the 1890's.¹⁷

Altogether we can only regret that Štejger's reputation has remained so long in Adamovič's hands. Ironically, in adopting such a patronizing attitude Adamovič betrays his own insecurities about his views on poetry. As we noted with Poplavskij, the temptation to dismiss in one way or another the work of the younger generation must have been very great indeed on the part of the elder, especially when they proved their independence and attained some kind of success. Looking over these "zametki" we cannot help noticing that the position assigned to Štejger is far closer to that of Adamovič's great rival, Chodasevič, than to Adamovič himself. As far as we know Štejger had little direct contact with Chodasevič, possibly because he did not live in Paris for any length of time (in fact Štejger only came to know Adamovič during his summer visits to Nice) but this would not exclude familiarity with his work. In any case, many of the ideas on poetry put forward by Chodasevič, as

exemplified in his Puškin criticism, are of a fairly universal nature. As we shall try to demonstrate there is more of a consistency between Štejger's poetry and Chodasevič's poetics than with Adamovič's various literary reflections.

One of the fundamental differences between Chodasevič and Adamovič concerns the degree of conscious control by the poet over his impressions and their expression. While it might seem an obvious mistake to think that poetic creativity is influenced by the intellect or will, literary history, particularly Russian, is full of cases where for one reason or another writers have consciously abandoned their professions. (We can recall in this regard the examples of Gogol', Tolstoj, Leont'ev and Aleksandr Dobroljubov, who all suffered from ethical or religious scruples about the value of artistic creation.) As we saw with Poplavskij, throughout his life there was a continual conflict about the justification of art, which he never fully reconciled. The rôle of reason then is as important in terms of supporting a poet's belief in his work as it is within the actual process of composition. Although we can assume that every writer comes to his own conclusions on this subject, independently of others, any reading of Russian literary criticism reveals how deep-rooted arguments on the meaning of art survived from one generation to the next, without apparently losing their significance. In our chapter on Chodasevič's criticism we observed how Chodasevič was able to preserve in exile a sense of the enduring value of literature by a critical application of those principles he learnt in his study of Puškin. Whatever personal difficulties Chodasevič might have had in writing poetry in his later years there can be no doubt that his essays, reviews and personal example helped to restrain the prevailing trend of defeatism among the émigré writers.

In two related articles "The Petersburg Modernists and the Tradition" (1973) and "Acmeism, Adamovich, the 'Parisian Note' and Anatolij Stejger" (1975) William Tjalsma traces the lineage of this classical Puškinian aesthetic backwards, not via Chodasevič, but by way of Adamovič and the Guild of Poets, which from our point of view only confuses the issue.¹⁸ Although he takes Adamovič's "zametki" on Štejger at face value, Tjalsma himself cannot conceal the discrepancy between Adamovič's supposed influence on Štejger and Štejger's actual practice. The crux of Tjalsma's argument is that Adamovič represented a healthy reaction against the excesses of "Gumilevščina" (that is a rather superficial Parnassian aesthetic) based on literary idols, Lermontov, Tolstoj, Annenskij and Blok.¹⁹ Unfortunately, much as Adamovič

claimed to believe in the importance of "commitment" in art his various articles and memoirs, as we have often had the occasion to notice, are highly unreliable, if not deliberately misleading.

If we remove the shadow of Adamovič from Tjalsma's argument, however, the scene is greatly simplified. In his first article on the Petersburg tradition Tjalsma explains how Achmatova and Mandel'stam were able to rid themselves of the worse aspects of "Gumilevščina", not by a return to Romanticism (Lermontov) or Symbolism (Blok), but by an intensification of the classical element of Acmeism. This would include a sense of respect for language (the idea of Logos), a certain restraint in lyrical self-expression and a loyalty to the neo-classical tradition of Russian culture, whether in the works of Puškin or in eighteenth century architecture. Tjalsma also mentions that contrary to initial expectations it would be the Acmeists (or former Acmeists) Achmatova and Mandel'stam who would be the first to realise the catastrophic nature of the Revolution and would be the poets who were able to insure through their work the survival of Russian literary culture.²⁰ Despite his defence of Adamovič as the central figure in Paris, Tjalsma ends his second article by affirming the parallel development of the Paris Note and late Acmeism without referring to Adamovič:

The poetry of the "Parisian note" and, especially that of Anatolij Steiger can be seen as a reaction against Acmeism (its dandyism, its preciousness, its tendency to "portray" rather than to "render"), or as an extension of it (Acmeism's restrained use of words and especially the use of words as direct references to a universally recognizable reality). The Parisian note is therefore a part of the wider Petersburg current in the mainstream of modern Russian poetry. Most significantly, the Russian poets of Paris represent in exile the greatest aspiration of Petersburg poetry — the movement toward a new Christian humanism, most apparent in the later poetry of Axmatova and Mandel'stam.²¹

One final aspect of the Acmeist aesthetic, which is relevant to our discussion of Štejger is also given attention by Tjalsma; the interest in changing perspective and lyric points of view:

Distortion, in Modernist poetry, is often achieved through the appropriation of one or another peculiar way of viewing the world. Again, there is a sort of spectrum running from the naive, the childlike, the primitive, ultimately to the world viewed as a dream or hallucination. Here, too, the Petersburgers tend, by and large, toward the less intensive end of the spectrum, i.e., they are more likely to see new ways of seeing by adopting a naive or childlike vision.²²

Taking as our starting point Štejger's interest in Žukovskij's inclusion of "ostroumie" in his definition of the essential qualities a poet must possess (and which we believe Štejger understood in its original sense) we will attempt an analysis of his work based on this question of the rôle consciousness plays in the creation of poetry and in a poet's career.

As Adamovič rightly implies we need not spend much time on Štejger's first volume of poetry *Ètot den'*. Štejger himself only included one of these poems in his retrospective collection, and even then he altered the last two lines. Although this volume is clearly the work of a young aesthetically minded talent we can still find traces of Štejger's mature period in it. The first poem (the one he later republished) introduces us to the main elements of his verse, an elegiac atmosphere produced with minimal means, verging on the elliptical:

Снова осень и сердце шемит —
Здесь сильнее дыхание грусти.
Эти дни я люблю проводить
Где-нибудь далеко в захолустьи.

Очертания острые крыш...
В небе ратуши темные башни...
Легкий сумрак... Стоишь и стоишь,
Заглядевшись на камни и пашни.

Вдаль уходят пустые поля,
Темнота опускается ниже.
С каждым часом и вздохом, земля,
Для меня ты становишься ближе!

(*Ètot den*, 7)

We might note here that in the revised version line three is changed to: "Èti dni chorošo provodit'" and lines eleven and twelve to: "Kak ni stranno, no vse že zemlja / S každyd godom nam budto vse bliže." This use of the impersonal construction to convey what is inherently a subjective emotion will appear increasingly, and more subtly, in Štejger's later volumes. At present, however, there is more emphasis on purely visual details. In these early poems it would seem that Štejger is trying to make the most of a certain genre familiar from Kuzmin, Gumilev and early Achmatova; the mannerist rendering of landscapes, historic places and works of art. Even here, however, he does not allow the theme to submerge the lyrical perception of these things. Aside from the stylistic resemblance to the poets of the Petersburg tradition we have in this

volume two poems concerned directly with the Petersburg-Paris axis. The first "Quai Voltaire", not only juxtaposes the two cities, but also includes a biographical reminiscence whose importance is underlined by the words "I ètot den'", the title of the whole volume.

Quai Voltaire

Опять сентябрь и воздух снова чистый
И в бледном небе стыннут облака,
Уносит вдаль безжизненные листья
Спокойная и мутная река.

Стена в стене. Вознесшиеся стены.
Чужой асфальт и холоден и сер.
На пьедестале у зеленой Сены
Скрывал лицо насмешливый Вольтер.

Привычный шум. Шуршат автомобили.
Холодный свет сентябрьской синевы.
О, если б мы хотя на час забыли
Течение величавое Невы!

И этот день... Его забыть нет силы,
Когда впервые, рано по утру,
Меня тропинкой снежной подвели
К надменному и грозному Петру.

Моей тоски и нерушимой веры
Я никому на свете не отдам.
Тоска, тоска! А черные химеры
Смеются на высокой Notre-Dame.

(*Ètot den*, 16)

Despite the openly nostalgic character of this poem it is not without a saving wit. The contrast between the small child's overwhelming impression of Falconet's statue and memory of the Neva, with the adult's vision of modern Paris with its murky river presided over by the grimaces of Voltaire and the gargoyles, introduces us to the lyric hero's dual vision. Just as Poplavskij defended his conception of Russia as a mythical Atlantis for his generation, so too Štejger presents Petersburg unreservedly as a lost paradise. If such naiveté has no meaning on a political plane, on the poetic it is perfectly justified. Although Štejger does reinterpret the past and his own perception of it from the point of view of the present, he never abandons his respect for his childhood

impressions. In many ways this is what separates the younger generation from the so-called middle generation (Georgij Ivanov, Nina Berberova, Irina Odoevceva et al.); having come of age by the time of the Revolution their perceptions of Russia would be forever tempered by all the merciless criticism of young adulthood. Although the lyric self is absent from the following poem we can recognise in it the same desire to avoid the intrusion of a critical or ironic perspective, as well as an intention to make a contribution to an established theme of Petersburg poetics:

Царское Село

I

Червонный лист, беспомощно шурша,
На землю падает и умирает,
Осенний ветер в зарослях играет,
Надламывая стебли камыша.

И на дорожку медленно сквозит
Из голубых полуоткрытых окон
Печальный силуэт... Упавший локон
По кружеву измятому скользит.

Императрица сумрачна, бледна,
Густые брови сведены сурова.
Она тоскует. Издали видна
Могила сероглазого Ланского...

II

Последний лебедь в стынушем пруду,
Раскинув крылья, голову наклонит,
Последний отблеск мимолетного тронет
Деревья в зачарованном саду.

И все уснет... Медлителен и хмур,
На мрамор ляжет тканью синеватой
Глубокий снег. У величавых статуй
Стрелу опустит раненый амур.

И зазвучит тогда, не весела,
Неповторимой песней лебединой,
Отходная пленительной, единой
И странной жизни Царского Села.

(*Ètot den'*, 20)

Of the nineteen poems in *Ètot den'* the majority are based on a similar pattern, with little inventiveness in terms of versification or structure.

In Štejger's second volume *Èta žizn'* (1932) we have, with the exception of one poem about a portrait of a Habsburg archduke, no further continuation of the aesthetic mannered style which characterised the first. In *Èta žizn'* nature seems to replace art objects as a focus for lyric expression. Here the pathetic fallacy is used to reflect the shifting states of mood and consciousness which is Štejger's particular talent. We can see in these poems partly the influence of Petersburg Symbolism, with its interest in problems of being and non-being (Gippius and Annenskij) and partly a parallel to Poplavskij's preoccupation with similar themes. In Štejger's case, however, there is none of the dream or nightmare imagery so much a part of Poplavskij's work, nor is there a mystical *fond*. Taking three poems written at Mährisch Trübau in winter, summer and autumn (1929-1930) we note the development of Štejger's mature style; extreme laconicism and the use of impersonal or first person plural forms. In the first, "Prostoj pejzaž" there is a mutual merging of the lyric self, the landscape and language into one indefinite whole recalling not the Petersburg poets but the nature poets of the nineteenth century, Baratynskij and Tjutčev.

Простой пейзаж

Слова печальны и просты,
Не хочет сердце слов заумных.
Да и к чему? — поля, кусты,
Полоска облаков чужуных...

Унылый снег опять идет,
Привычной болью сердце вяжет.
Не каждый этот край поймет,
Не каждый путь в него укажет.

(*Èta žizn'*, 38)

A further link with Tjutčev is apparent if we compare this with Tjutčev's "Èti bednye selen'ja" (1855):

Эти бедные селенья,
Эта скучная природа —
Край родной долготерпенья,
Край ты русского народа!

Не поймет и не заметит
Гордый взор иноплемennyй,
Что сквозит и тайно светит
В нагоде твоей смиренной.
etc.

Not only then does Štejger's poem reiterate the older poet's belief in the inadequacy of language, but also his appreciation for melancholy Slavonic landscapes.

In "My ničego ne znam" the lyric "we" is contrasted with the lyric hero who is present mostly in the capacity of an observer; his mood, in this case one of revery, is conveyed by reference to external objects in the manner of Achmatova. At first the connection is not clear, requiring the final lines to complete the association.

Мы ничего не знаем,
Мы ничего не слышим,
Грезят о чуждом рае
Святые по темным нишам.

Пыль на июльской дороге
Нежит ленивые ноги.
Низкое солнце брезжит
На монастырском пороге.

Пахнет горошком, левкоем,
Долгою сущностью лета.
Мы же воздушные замки
Строим, — и платим за это.

(*Ėta žizn'*, 17; $2 \times 2 = 4$, 58)

This sense of the unreality of our reveries and their eventual collapse pervades the rest of *Ėta žizn'*, as yet, however, no distinct relation is made between the illusions fostered in childhood and the inability to accept the apparent instability and uncertainty of life. At present the conflict is merely considered to be universal and inevitable. In the last of the poems we will quote the lyric "we" or everyman moves through an indifferent world trying in vain to abandon its romanticism:

Осень

I

Уйдем — и никто заметит,
Придем — и никто нас не встретит,
Никто нам руки не протянет,
Прощаясь, прощая, встречая..

По небу плывет догорая
Луна. Умирают цветы
Недвижно ложатся листья,

И осень, упав на колени,
Стучит головой о ступени.

II

Словам не поверим —
Они невесомы слова,
Мы счастья весомого просим.
А в нашем саду уже пожелтела листва,
И небо зашло, и бездомная осень
Идет по траве, ни жива, ни мертва,
И вянет и блекнет за нею трава.

Она обнимает высокий расколотый ствол.
Она прижимается влажной щекою
К холодной коре... А вдали над горою,
Медлительно тихо спускаясь к горе,
Уж крутится снег. И охапки соломы
Уже вылетают из жаркой трубы.
И такие как раньше слова невесомы
Любви безпредельной, любви и судьбы.

(*Èta žizn'*, 32-33; $2 \times 2 = 4$, 65)

Aside from all the long-standing connotations of autumn we can say that for Štejer autumn serves the same purpose as twilight does for Poplavskij, as a symbolical time of uneasiness. Again we have a reminiscence of Tjutčev; the weightlessness of words in comparison with reality. If in this poem the workings of Fate are not as sinister as in Tjutčev, then in the following they are nonetheless as inexorable:

Книга Жизни

I

Не нами писанные главы,
Но нам по этой книге жить,
Терять надежду и тужить,
Искать и подвига и славы,

И вдруг понять, что не дано
Нам изменить хотя бы строчки,
Что в Книге Жизни ставит точки
Лишь Провидение одно...

II

Каждый ждет долгожданного чуда,
Каждый верит — настанет черед!
Безразлично когда и откуда
Наше бедное счастье придет.

Только сердце устанет. А миги
Не летят, а ползут как века.
Перелистывать скучные книги
Не торопится Божья рука.

(*Èta žizn'*, 53-54)

Although there is some notion of finality in the first two stanzas it is partially undone, though not mitigated, by the divine slowness expressed in the second part. Throughout *Èta žizn'* one finds similar statements of indecisiveness, whether on earth or above, with the implication that this is through some kind of fatal inertia: "I slyšitsja s neba otvet / Ne jasnyj. Ni da, ni net."; "I sypjatsja sroki nezrimo / Peskom iz ruk Tvoich."; "Ne to, ne to! No tak projdut goda / I my ne skažem pravdy nikogda."; "I žizn' idet. I my ne zamečаем." (pp.7,8,45,28).

In both *Ètot den'* and *Èta žizn'* Štejger seems to have avoided any forms of experimentation, relying on a particular setting to create the desired effect. Both diction and stanza structure have remained conventional. In his third volume *Neblagodarnost'* (1936) we see a radical change in terms of the use of language and the construction of lines. Of particular importance is the introduction of the parenthesis and the reduction of the number of lines, often to five. The first device underlines the given emotion, while at the same time allowing a certain detachment. This commentary within the poem is not necessarily ironic,

for as we have seen in the early poems Štejger tries to maintain a balance between romanticism and cynicism. In the first poem of *Neblagodarnost'* this balance is finely weighted, with as much an admission of self-delusion as of self-confidence:

Мы верим книгам, музыке, стихам,
Мы верим снам, которые нам снятся,
Мы верим слову... (Даже тем словам,
Что говорят в утешенье нам,
Что из окна вагона говорятся)...

(*Neblagodarnost'*, 7; $2 \times 2 = 4$, 33)

In many ways this poem (dated 1933) epitomises the "Paris Note" and especially the spirit of *Čisla*; on the one hand there is the affirmation of creativity and the power of language, and on the other, the awareness that art, even at its best, offers no practical solutions. The impossible situation of the younger generation had, of course been discussed by Gippius, Chodasevič, Adamovič and others, who ostensibly did as much as they could on its behalf. If Poplavskij entered more openly into polemics with various critics of *Čisla* and tried to defend the "confused" programme of its editors, then Štejger, perhaps more successfully than any of the younger poets, expressed in verse the general helplessness of his contemporaries. His numerous poems which involve the difficulty of coming to terms with adult life refer to far more than a personal grudge, as they implicate the degree to which the older generation had been responsible for the collapse of the old order and for the disarray of the present. In the second poem of *Neblagodarnost'*, with its quotation from Annenskij, the transition from the security of an old-fashioned Russian childhood to the untowardness of émigré life could not be more succinctly described:

Подумай, на руках у матерей

Все это были розовые дети.

И. Анненский

Никто, как в детстве, нас не ждет внизу.

Не переводит нас через дорогу.

Про злого муравья и стрекозу

Не говорит. Не учит верить Богу.

До нас теперь нет дела никому —
У всех довольно собственного дела.
И надо жить, как все, — но самому...

(Беспомощно, нечестно, неумело).

(*Neblagodarnost'*, 8; $2 \times 2 = 4$, 22)

What distinguishes Štejger's poetry from either the essays or poems of Poplavskij is his complete lack of an overriding philosophy into which he wants to fit experience. Without quoting numerous poems it is impossible to give an adequate idea of the freedom with which Štejger first builds up an emotion only to call it into question, either in the same poem, as in parenthesis, or in the same volume. While it might seem as though this were the ultimate in "human document" art we cannot help noticing the careful devices of distancing and gentle irony; hence our suggestion that Štejger owes as much to Puškinian classicism as to Tjutčev's romanticism. In "Vesna" this stoical detachment in no way prevents a calm appreciation of life:

Весна

1

Снова в Париже весна начинается
Очень застенчива, очень слаба.
Что-то как будто бы даже меняется...
Уж не судьба ли? едва ли судьба...

2

Все таки нас это тоже касается:
Ландыши, что продают на мосту;
Лица прохожих (их взгляд, что встречается);
Облака; день, что за днем удлиняется;
Русские службы (вечерня в Посту)...

3

Жизнь, — в этой жизни всегда невесело,
Мир оказался серьезней, умней...
Сердце давно все измерило, взвесило,
Даже весну — и тоску, что в ней...

(*Neblagodarnost'*, 26)

Nowhere else is Štejger's artistic balance more apparent than in his love poetry, which, at least in this volume never seeks a fixed form or resolu-

tion. From self-dramatization to bitter reflection and attempts at resignation the lyric expression is controlled, but not constrained. Once again the use of parentheses helps to modify the intensity of the emotion, without subverting it:

Не получая писем, сколько раз
Мы сочиняли (в самоутешение...?)
Наивно-драматический рассказ
Про револьвер, болезнь или крушение...

Отлично зная — просто не до нас
(Но уж не в силах обойтись без фальши,
Поверить правде до конца страшась,
Не смея думать, что же будет дальше)...

(*Neblagodarnost'*, 28; $2 \times 2 = 4$, 37)

Although some of these poems are written in the first person most make their effect through a combination of different personal forms and constructions.

Так от века уже повелось,
Чтоб одни притворились и лгали,
А другие им лгать помогали,
(Беспощадно все видя насквозь) —
И все вместе любовью звалось...

(*Neblagodarnost'*, 29; $2 \times 2 = 4$, 39)

.....
Как нам от громких отучиться слов —
Что значит „самолюбие“, „унижение“.
(Когда прекрасно знаешь, что готов
На первый знак ответить, первый зов,
На первое малейшее движенье)...

(*Neblagodarnost'*, 10; $2 \times 2 = 4$, 51)

In Štejger's last volume, which as we mentioned was entitled *Kathēmerinē* in manuscript, there is a continuation of the main spirit of *Neblagodarnost'*, but we also notice a darker shade, a certain sobriety and at times bitterness lacking in the previous work. In "60-e Gody" which is dedicated to Cvetaeva and which is a response to her poem "Otcam", Štejger again tries to deflate the use of "gromkie slova". Needless to say, Cvetaeva was highly indignant, more on his behalf than

her own, that he should treat so off-handedly the only things she considered to be sacred:

60-е Годы

В сущности это как старая повесть
(„Шестидесятых годов дребедень“)...
Каждую ночь просыпается совесть
И наступает расплата за день.

Мысли о младшем страждующем брате,
Мысли о нищего жалкой суме,
О позабытом в больничной палате,
О заключенном невинно в тюрьме.

И о погибших во имя свободы,
Равенства, братства, любви и труда.

Шестидесятые вечные годы...

(„Сентиментальная ерунда“.)

(*Kathēmerinē*, 18; $2 \times 2 = 4$, 44)

Significantly this poem appeared in volume 62 of *Sovremennye zapiski* in 1936, which follows immediately after the issue containing Cvetaeva's "Otcam". As this was also the year of their correspondence Cvetaeva criticised this poem, in particular, in one of her last letters.²³ In the version published later in $2 \times 2 = 4$ (1950, 1982) a question-mark is placed after the final words "Sentimental'naja erunda", which could be seen as some kind of concession to Cvetaeva's reaction. Later in this volume we have a complete reversal of the cynicism of "60-e Gody" which could not adhere more to the Cvetaeva ethic:

Как закричать, чтоб донеслось в тюрьму
За этот вал и через стены эти,
Что изменили здесь не все ему,
Что не совсем покинут он на свете?

Я видел сон, что я к тебе проник,
Сел на постель и охватил за плечи...
(Ведь он давно наверное отвык
От нежности и тихой братской речи).

Но дружба есть, на самом деле есть,
И нежность есть, стыдливая, мужская...
Не долг, а честь, особенная честь
Напомнить это, глаз не опуская...

(*Kathēmerinē*, 10; $2 \times 2 = 4$, 59)

The emotional objectivity expressed here on a personal level is carried over into Štejger's poems written at the onset of the war on political themes. These include "Homage to England" and "Finskaja vojna".²⁴ Štejger is at his best, however, when combining the personal with the historic, especially when there is a reminiscence of Russian life before the Revolution. From his travels in the Balkans we have a cycle of four poems entitled "Bessarabia", as well as individual ones. The following was written on Corfù in 1938 and contains the essential elements of Štejger's poetry from all his periods:

Опять Сентябрь. Короткий промежуток
Меж двух дождей. Как тихо в Сентябре.
В такие дни, не опасаясь шуток,
Мы все грустим о счастье и добре.

В такие дни все равно одиноки:
Кто без семьи, и кто еще в семье.
Высокий мальчик в школе на уроке
Впервые так согнулся на скамье.

Старик острее помнит о прошедшем...
О, если-б можно сызнова начать
И объяснить, что он был сумасшедшим...
Но лучше скомкать все и замолчать.

А в поле сырость, сумерки, безмолвье,
Следы колес, покинутый шалаш.
Убогим хлеба, хворому здоровье
И миру мир Ты никогда не дашь...

(*Kathēmerinē*, 22; $2 \times 2 = 4$, 26)

This overlapping of individual and historical destinies finds its ultimate expression in the poems of "Bessarabia", for here, as if *da capo*, Štejger sees repeated the very life and history which had seemed destroyed forever. The following opens the cycle:

Две барышни в высоком шарабане,
Верхом за ними двое панычей.
Все как в наивно-бытовом романе,
Минувший век до самых мелочей.

И не найти удачной декораций:
Дворянский дом на склоне у реки,
Студент с начала самого „вакаций“,
Фруктовый сад, покосы, мужики.

Но в чем-то все же скрытая подделка
И вечный страх, что двинется сейчас
По циферблату роковая стрелка...
(Уж двадцать лет она щадила нас.)

(*Kathēmerinē*, 32; $2 \times 2 = 4$, 83)

Inevitably, when dealing with lyric poetry, one must beware of making too many generalizations. In the case of Štejger there are over one hundred and twenty-five poems, many of them consisting of no more than a few lines. Our aim here has not been to carry out a comprehensive study of his work, but to show in this survey of his four volumes some of the complexities underlying his poetry. Aside from stressing the need to read his poems more attentively, we should also like to consider Štejger in the context of contemporary criticism and to reconstruct, on the basis of his letters to Zinaida Šachovskaja, some of his views on literature and Russian émigré life.

The first reviews that we have of Štejger's poetry tend to place him in relation to various unexpected combinations of other poets. In his review of *Ètot den'* Adamovič maintains that Štejger owes as much to Gippius as to Georgij Ivanov²⁵; while a certain B. Sosinskij, writing on *Èta žizn'*, mentions Blok and Annenskij as well as the Acmeists.²⁶ Otherwise they both see in Štejger more potential than actual achievement. With the publication of *Neblagodarnost'* the critics become more serious. Michail Cetlin first of all notes how well received this volume was among the émigré audience. He goes on to say that, despite their fragmentary character, these poems possess "podlinnaja nasyščennost'". He describes Štejger's technique as "impressionistic", deciding that, aside from the obvious influence of Annenskij (via Achmatova), his volume is highly original and inimitable.²⁷ A more revealing perception of Štejger, however, is provided by his fellow "Paris Note" poet, Lidiya Červinskaja, in her review of the same volume.²⁸ She begins by stating that she cannot help approaching every new work of literature

with an eye to its relation to the contemporary crisis of culture, whose collapse she compares to the shattering of a giant vase. For Červinskaja, Štejger's poetry represents a fragment of this once solid culture: "Vnešne (i ne tol'ko, konečno) stichi èti gibkie, tonkie i stranno-krepkie. Boleznennost' ich tol'ko poverchnostna i kak-by privyčno delannaja".²⁹ While she admits that one can easily trace Štejger's poetic lineage (Georgij Ivanov, Achmatova and Annenskij) she claims him primarily as a Paris poet, whose work speaks directly to his contemporaries. She recognises in him all the elements of a mature poet: "Knigu uznaeš' po bezošibočnomu priznaku: vseгда konkretnyj povod, často neznačitel'nyj (ot povyšennoj zadevaemosti), počti soznatel'nye priemy i rjodom s ètim podlinnaja (ne intellektual'naja u Štejgera, èmocional'naja skoree) metafizičnost'".³⁰

As we have argued throughout this work, one of the best ways of interpreting the émigré literature of Paris is through its own criticism. Aside from the interest debates on the meaning of literature have for the student of poetics and literary history, the émigré criticism of the period in question sheds a great deal of light on a variety of issues, from the self-definition of the emigration, and its conception of Russian culture, to the understanding of individual writers. As we have also maintained it is vital to present as many points of view as possible without trying to force either too many similarities, or too many differences, between them. This is particularly true when dealing with the relations between the generation. As we saw with Poplavskij, the tension between his personal interests in non-Russian culture and his identification with the emigration produced some rather paradoxical statements on art and the survival of émigré and world culture. That Poplavskij both pleased and exasperated the older generation is typical of this period. Like Poplavskij Štejger is commonly seen as a representative of the "Paris Note" with the exception that he is more closely identified with Adamovič. If our survey of Štejger's poetry has not adequately demonstrated how misleading this identification is, then an examination of some of his letters, in the absence of any criticism by him, should.

From our point of view the key to Štejger's poetry, as well as to the problem of studying émigré literature, has been the rôle consciousness plays both within and around a work of art. The development of a mature professional attitude to the writing of poetry, in different ways, lies at the heart of the debates on émigré literature. As we suggested in the beginning of this chapter, Štejger's position seems much closer to the severe demands of Chodasevič than to the vague "Tolstoyan"

poetics of Adamovič. Thus it is with great interest that we read at first hand what little Štejger has left about his ideas on literature.

The most important letters of Štejger to Zinaida Šachovskaja (published in her memoirs *Otraženija* in 1975) date from the time of his stay at the sanatorium of Heiligenschwendi (June 1935–November 1936). Having first met her in Constantinople Štejger had turned to Šachovskaja in March of 1935 in order to arrange a poetry reading through her in Brussels. Afterwards they corresponded on various literary subjects including the details of publishing *Neblagodarnost'*. In his first letter from Switzerland he tells her of his impressions of the Third Reich which he had experienced recently in Berlin and which he considered to be a great threat to Russia and Russian culture. He also mentions his meeting with Sirin-Nabokov:

Сирин читал стихи — мне просто непонятны, — рассказ, очень средний, — и блестящий ортывок из *biographie romancée* — шаржа? памфлета против „общественности“? — о Чернышевском. Блестящий.... Сирин чрезвычайно к себе располагающий — *puis c'est un monsieur*, — что так редко у нас в литературных водах, — но его можно встречать 10 лет каждый день и ничего о нем не узнать решительно. На меня он произвел впечатление почти трагического „неблагополучия“ и я ничему от него не удивлюсь... Но — после наших встреч мой очень умеренный к нему раньше интерес — необычайно вырос.³¹

This description of Nabokov, aside from its accuracy, shows both Štejger's independence from Adamovič, who was openly hostile to him, as well as his own reservations. As this correspondence underlines, while Štejger's poetry might seem to have a very well defined source of inspiration, he was nonetheless *au courant* with the writings of his fellow émigrés. Following a short visit to Prague, after Berlin, he says of the literary life there: "Konečno, mnogoe posle Pariža stranno-inoj ton i stil' čut' vse-taki moskovskij, no vse-taki počti možno bylo najti obščij jazyk i obščuju daže temu." More important, of course, are Štejger's views on Paris and its link with Petersburg. In one letter he states how isolated he feels in Switzerland and how important Paris is to him:

Если благополучно пройдет осень, то к следующей зиме значит все пойдет по старому опять — Монпарнасы, Мережковские, собрания, пустоватая наша парижская сутолока которую я всею в общем предпочитаю — где-нибудь и с кем-нибудь жить ведь надо.³²

This not entirely complimentary tribute to émigré Paris is followed by a discussion of the lives and deaths of various literary journals. As far as

Štejer is concerned all efforts should have gone into supporting *Čisla*, then in its last year of publication:

Лучше было бы вместо всех этих комедий — „Звезд“, Ильи Исидоровича, Содружества и проч. — помочь Оцупу и чаще издавать „Числа“, все равно все так или иначе идет под их знаком или их пародирует. Люблю „Числа“ со всеми их недостатками и по-моему они не уступают ни в чем „Аполло-ну“ и его, в сущности продолжают.³³

The significance of the Petersburg legacy arises again in this letter when Štejer questions Šachovskaja about her meeting with Zamjatin who had arrived in France in 1932. For Štejer this meant a direct source of information from Russia:

Очень интересно все что Вы пишете...о рассказах Замятина. Ахматова сама про себя писала в стихах „Я дурная мать...“ Напишите о ней подробнее. Все, что ее касается — меня крайне волнует. Не говорил ли Замятин о Кузьмине? О Мандельштаме?³⁴

He complains in the next letter that she has failed to satisfy his request. Finally, he offers an explanation of his interest in Acmeism and Petersburg based on both personal and professional reasons. First, in commenting upon a recent volume of poems by Šachovskaja he praises the fact that one of them is “...zakončennoe ... i ‘deržitsja na nogach’”.³⁵ He goes on to say:

Может быть я пристрастен к этому стихотворению, как ко всему акмеистическому, но мне кажется, что акмеисты *тогда* и *так* не смогли бы написать — нужно было все „последующее“. И, конечно, это шаг по дороге, но по дороге „из и от“ (von und zu, как у немецких аристократов) акмеизма.³⁶

Thus in so many words Štejer defines the evolution of the Paris School, and the background of his poetry. Further on he chides Šachovskaja for her disparaging remarks about Adamovič and Montparnasse. While he admits that this group is ruled by a certain folly, he defends it by comparing it with the other émigré circles, especially those of the ex-nobility:

Что касается меня, то я больше с настоящими правоведами и лиценстами сидеть не в состоянии и предпочитаю Селект и Наполи „чашке чая русских дворян“ и Галлиполийскому собранию: деклассированная, разночинская, полувейрейская, безнадежная и чуть сумасшедшая наша монпарнасская среда — на которой все же тень от Петербурга, от Петербургского периода русской литературы, — мне чрезвычайно мила.³⁷

Interspersed with these comments on Paris life are many instructions

about the publication of *Neblagodarnost'* which clearly indicate Štejger's professional concern about his work. He cites the disastrous first edition of Poplavskij's *Flagi* as a warning to all émigré poets.³⁸

As we mentioned earlier it makes as much sense to read Štejger's verse in the light of Chodasevič's criticism as in relation to Adamovič, for we find in both the same conservatism and perfectionism. External factors, more than anything else, seem to have prevented them meeting on common ground. Aside from the fact that Chodasevič avoided Montparnasse, Štejger like so many of his generation took exception to the widespread, but as they saw it, meaningless cult of Puškin. Writing in 1937 about the Puškin jubilee Štejger says:

О Пушкине не может быть и речи. Несмотря на кликушество подубилейное в эмиграции и в России, где воскресший квартальный отбирает подписку в любви к нему, я слишком знаю что такое Пушкин и никогда не посмею его коверкать.... Ханжество кругом имени Пушкина подчас прямо невыносимо.³⁹

Such a reaction to the name of Puškin does not surprise us when we realise the context in which it appears. More intriguing is Štejger's mention of Rilke, which is limited as far as this correspondence is concerned to the following: "iz gazet vižu, što krome bel'gijcev Vy ešče vozites' s K.N., ktorogo ja očen' cenju za ljubov' k Ril'ke."⁴⁰

We cannot hope, on the basis of such little evidence, to reconstruct fully Štejger's cultural world view, at best we can only call into question some of the hasty remarks made by others and to offer an alternative opinion. Doubtless there is a certain amount of "detskaja obida", as Ivask calls it, throughout Štejger's work, but, as Červinskaja recognised, this was as much on behalf of an entire generation as on his own. As a comparison between his letters and his poetry shows, while Štejger took great interest in the work of other writers, within his own craft he was careful to cultivate only his particular talents. In his last volume, which unfortunately did not appear before the war, Štejger is able to achieve a remarkable combination of the elegiac and the caustic, without ever sacrificing the requirements of economy and restraint. The full extent of his self-possession and artistic maturity can be measured against this passage in one of his letters to Šachovskaja where he discusses the present political situation in Europe:

Вы бы пришли в ужас-как я и сам прихожу, — до какой степени я не дням, а по часам-„левею“. Объяснение этому простое: я пришел к мысли, что всему объяснение в том, что „мы“ (т.е. руководящие классы) величайшее сокровище человечества-Христианство-не только не попытались пе-

редать „малым сим“ (народу, пролетариату), но обезвредили, засахарили и употребили и пытаемся еще употребить на защиту наших материальных мерзостей. А если так, то ни удивляться, ни возмущаться-ничего. На смену нам, культурным, лощеным и „благородным“ анти-христианам приходят, вернее врываются, антихристиане варвары, огромные, варварские толщи народов, которые мы до сих пор сдерживали при помощи силы и церкви. „Мы“ это даже, и по счастью, не совсем верно, — нас давно уже смела буржуазия и разночинцы, час которых наступает теперь. „Мы“ же на это зрелище можем смотреть даже и не без злорадства: „наш“ главный враг-буржуазия, и к тому же она повторила все наши ошибки и преступления. В этой схватке все мои симпатии на стороне варварского пролетариата, хотя я уверен, что он тоже сделает себе из жизни ад, и так до скончания века...“⁴¹

Such a vision of the coming *Ragnarok* leaves nothing to be desired, even in comparison with those of the Merežkovskij and Poplavskij; yet, extreme and emotional as Štejger could obviously be, he still understood the necessity of detachment and the “daemonic” principle in art. From whatever sources of inspiration, personal and literary, Štejger embodies for his age the spirit of Russian classicism, with its belief as defined by Baratynskij in 1827: “Istinnye poëty potomu imenno redki, čto im dolžno obladat’ v to že vremja svojstvami, soveršenno protivorečščimi drug drugu: plamenem voobraženija tvorčeskogo i cholodom uma poverjajuščego.”⁴²

CONCLUSION

In this work I have attempted to resolve some of the misunderstandings which have arisen over the so-called Paris School of Russian émigré literature between 1920 and 1940. In particular I have re-examined the problem of the relations between the "fathers and children" in exile, as seen in the criticism of Gippius, Chodasevič, Adamovič and Poplavskij, and in the poetry of Poplavskij and Štejger. Although I have made a selection from the many poets and critics writing at the time I think the material I have presented is diverse enough to show that a unity of purpose among the émigrés of both generations was compatible with a wide variety of other interests and that no critic imposed an artificial uniformity on the circles under their influence. In this regard I have adopted the position of Terapiano which I believe in the end validates the use of the concepts and terms the "Paris School" and the "Paris Note". Where I have found the most disagreement on this point has been in the memoirs and studies which have not made sufficient reference to primary material, or which, for a variety of reasons, wish to dismiss this literature or its underlying spirit. This has convinced me that any research into the Paris School must be based on a close familiarity with original sources.

In Part One I have surveyed the development of our perception of the Paris School which, in many ways, is dependent on the secondary literature which has appeared since the demise of the pre-war school. In this respect we can only regret the great lapse of time between the various efforts to treat the Paris School seriously, for it delays the entry of this literature into the generally known body of Russian culture. Fortunately, for the specialist, there now exists enough bio-bibliographical information to make more sophisticated research possible. Thus, in reviewing the secondary literature I have been more interested in revealing attitudes to the Paris School since 1940 than in repeating factual details which can be found elsewhere. Beginning with Gippius and ending with the Ivask-Ètkind correspondence I have tried to draw out conflicting interpretations. Even in Gippius' outline for her "Istorija ruskoj èmigrantskoj intelligencii", for example, one cannot help noticing the strongly patronising air Gippius takes when mentioning the

young poets of Montparnasse. As many of the quotations in later chapters indicate, there is something rather ironic about this condescension on the part of Gippius, and others, for most of the younger generation include her as an integral part of their literary and intellectual lives. This problem of classification and identification is found throughout the discussion of the origins of the Paris School and Paris Note. While Gippius, Adamovič and Berberova, to name a few of the older and middle generation, try to distance themselves from the whole, Terapiano and Janovskij insist that they were all part of the greater mosaic of Paris literature, just as Poplavskij had declared earlier that Chodasevič could not be excluded from a consideration of the School. This process of division extends, as I have shown, to much of the work by non-émigrés in recent years, who either isolate one poet from the idea of belonging to a school, such as Karlinsky with Poplavskij, or else try to dispose of the entire literary establishment in Paris, as so much of the work on Nabokov and Cvetaeva has done.

In the articles and letters of Jurij Ivask I found a more constructive approach to the study of the Paris School. Rather than assigning rôles and relative positions to the various poets of the time, Ivask defends the poetic of Paris as a whole. In stating that the two main features of the Paris School were its links with the Silver Age and its emphasis on "žalost'", Ivask reveals some of the reasons why the Paris School has been disparaged and why critics have often felt it necessary to save the reputations of their adopted poets from any association with it. As Ivask writes in his preface to the "Russica" edition of Štejger's poetry (1982), themes of pity and the workings of the conscience are no longer popular in modern literature, and their presence is apt to make us ill at ease. Likewise he identifies the Silver Age's influence on émigré poetry not so much with surface aesthetics, but with the belief in the metaphysical nature of poetic language and a loyalty to a pan-European cultural tradition. Once we accept these premises it makes it much easier to place the work of the Paris School in a proper perspective.

As we have seen, admitting that Paris represents a continuation of the Silver Age does not mean that any specific programme was established or instituted. In the criticism of Gippius, Chodasevič, Poplavskij, Adamovič and Jurij Mandel'stam, introduced in Part Two, I wished to show that the influence of Symbolism, and its related movement Acmeism, was still very much alive. In general we see a process whereby the excesses of Symbolism (technical virtuosity, "musicality", demonism and myth-making), as well as of Acmeism (Gumilev's neo-

romanticism), are rejected in favour of a poetics of simplicity and honesty, a restrained neo-classical or "Petersburgian" diction, and, most importantly, an interest in the metaphysical strain of Russian lyric poetry deriving from Baratynskij and Tjutčev. The vitality of Symbolism in its more serious form is further demonstrated by the criticism of Gippius and Chodasevič of different developments in contemporary Russian culture: behind both Gippius' anti-Bolshevism and Chodasevič's anti-Formalism and anti-Futurism is the Symbolist belief in the sacredness of language and the calling of the poet.

In the cases of Adamovič and Poplavskij, this process of re-assessing the positive contribution of the Silver age is more complicated. Unlike Gippius and Chodasevič, they were both inclined to see artistic creativity, especially in the circumstances of exile, as unethical. In order to obtain a more balanced picture than the one which has tended to give Adamovič sole responsibility for the creation of the Paris Note, I have given far more attention to Poplavskij's criticism than to Adamovič's. In principle I have wanted to show that far from being an anarchical and unlettered poet, Poplavskij was well versed in Russian and European culture and had a deeper understanding than Adamovič of the moral ambiguity of art. In Poplavskij's passionate mysticism and belief in the struggle of the emigration against Soviet influence, there is little trace of Adamovič's ironic scepticism; in this respect he is much closer to the views of the Merežkovskijs. As a comparison to Poplavskij's criticism, I have taken that of Jurij Mandel'stam, which has the advantage of combining the historical and cultural consciousness of Chodasevič with a belief in a kenotic and apocalyptic Christianity so important to Poplavskij. Of equal interest is Mandel'stam's dismissal of the poetry of Adamovič and Georgij Ivanov as being insufficiently tragic and reflective of émigré life.

In Part Three I have concentrated on the poetry of Poplavskij and Štejger which best illustrates the progress of the Paris Note. Naturally this has been somewhat at the expense of other considerations, such as evaluating their work according to their formal merits or in connection with their biographies. By placing this poetry within the criticism of their contemporaries, however, I think I have been able to reach a certain grasp of both the aspirations of the Paris poets and their actual achievements. Once there is more familiarity with the texts of the period they can be discussed from other points of view.

In the case of Poplavskij, we are given the chance of judging his poetry in the light of his own extremely high standards. His desire to

create an "absolute poetry", which could convey an otherworldly vision without any concession to merely surface details and literary conventions, inevitably proved to be a risky undertaking, and we can well believe that Poplavskij often considered abandoning it. In the articles from *Čisla* which I have quoted, concerning the need for a poet to communicate with his readers and in his reviews of contemporary painting, Poplavskij asserts the potential of art to transform our perception of reality in a way which makes the transition from the self-engrossed Surrealism of *Flagi* to the more human world of *Snežnyj čas* wholly understandable.

In the work of Štejger I have followed a different thread. Here it is a question of re-assessing Adamovič's claims and assumptions and of reconstructing Štejger's actual development. Like Poplavskij, Štejger cultivated an art of total honesty; however, as he was more interested in capturing moods and emotions, rather than inner visions, he owes more to the this-worldliness of Acmeism, with its attention to the movements of daily life and the rhythms of conversational speech, than to Symbolism. Even though we can find a number of influences at work in his poetry, the resulting precision of laconically delineated emotion is thoroughly original and marks a new stage in Russian lyric poetry.

Aside from the poets of the Silver Age, who seem in one way or another to have dominated the Paris School, I have mentioned the strong influence of the Romantic tradition, represented especially by Lermontov, Baratynskij and Tjutčev. With the exception of Chodasevič, however, Puškin does not appear to occupy a prominent place in the minds of the Paris poets; perhaps justifiably, considering the tenor of the times.

Although I have touched briefly on the question of the influence of French literature in the case of Poplavskij, it would seem true that the émigrés were satisfied with their own cultural tradition. The fact that most of the younger generation decided to write in Russian when they could have made the transition to French shows the hold of their native language over them and their indifference to the contemporary culture of France. This is a point still worthy of further investigation, particularly in regard to the prose writing of the younger generation. More intriguing for the study of poetry, however, is the frequent appearance of Rilke's name throughout this period. Aside from the remarks of Ivask, Jurij Mandel'stam and Štejger, I have come across numerous statements to the effect that Rilke was the one European poet the émigrés felt understood them. Perhaps this is because he not only knew

and loved Russia, but also because he too had survived the historical catastrophe of the war years with his commitment to poetry intact and was himself something of an exile for most of his life. Notwithstanding the now famous correspondence of Rilke and Cvetaeva, I think his actual influence might have been greater on some of the other émigré poets. In this respect I might mention the various translations of Rilke by Gleb Struve (included in his volume of poetry *Utloe žil'e*), Aleksandr Bisk (the father of Alain Bosquet), and Grigorij Zabežinskij.

The question of possible French and German influences brings us to the subject of the potential of this literature and of future research. Having used the criticism of the time which seemed most appropriate for the re-reading of the poetry of Poplavskij and Štejger I have indicated, especially in regard to Chodasevič, the importance of some of this literature on its own merits. Chodasevič's work on Puškin, like his biography of Deržavin, certainly deserves to be more widely read. His other articles on historical and contemporary literature are also of great value and invite further study, particularly as they remind us that the language of Russian literary scholarship is not incompatible with a sense of style and refined usage.

Like Chodasevič, Gippius made criticism something of a substitute for the writing of poetry in exile. In her case, but for slightly different reasons, I think her revival is also fully justified. Not only are her memoirs *Živye lica* and biography of her husband as brilliant and insightful into the pre-Revolutionary period as Chodasevič's *Nekropol'*, but her merciless assaults in the émigré press on the foundations and pretensions of the Soviet régime have lost none of their bite and relevance. Like two other leading figures of the Silver Age, Vjačeslav Ivanov and Anna Achmatova, Gippius was able to survive into old age without losing her energies or original loyalties. Further investigation of her career in exile, especially in her letters, would reveal, as with Ivanov and Achmatova, the tenacity of the ideals of Symbolist era, and the way they could be re-adapted to a variety of circumstances, political and cultural.

Finally, turning to the work of the younger generation, the first recommendation is that their poetry be read and re-read. Although I have taken Poplavskij and Štejger as the most representative poets of the pre-War period, only further reading of their contemporaries' work, such as that of Nikolaj Gronsij, Aleksandr Ginger, Lidija Červinskaja and Alla Golovina, can reveal the way individual styles were integrated into the larger compass of the Paris School. Along with tracing the

presence of the Paris Note after the war, it will also be necessary to study the prose work of the younger generation in relation to the poetry and criticism of the time. In this regard we can look forward one day to the publication of complete editions of Poplavskij's novels *Apollon Bezobrazov* and *Domoj s nebes*. If nothing else these remarkable and virtually unclassifiable novels should provoke renewed interest into his and his contemporaries' work, both in the West and in the Soviet Union.

In a world culture dominated by the laws of force and expediency, the work of the Paris School, whether in poetry, prose or criticism, might appear as something of an anachronism, a last vestige of enlightened European humanism and the Russian Silver Age, and in the light of the political realities of its time, merely a high-minded *geste*; but perhaps for these very reasons, it can still challenge our perceptions of twentieth century Russian history and speak to us as literature.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

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PART ONE

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- 17 Jurij Ivask, "Serebrjanyj Vek v ruskoj literature: napominaem ob Ad-moviče", *Russkaja mysl'*, 3599 (13 Dec. 1985).
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2 Nikolaj Ocup, "Ot redakcii", Čisla, 1 (1930), 6.

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- 12 Georgij Adamovič, "Est' li cel' u poëzii", in Ju. Terapiano, *Vstreči* (New York, 1953), 67, 69.
- 13 Ibid., 67-68.
- 14 Idem, *Kommentarii*, (Washington D.C., 1967), 7-8.
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- 21 Ibid., 29.
- 22 Ibid., 29.
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- 24 Ibid., 309.
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- 27 Idem, "O smerti i žalosti v Čislach", *Novaja gazeta*, 3 (1 April 1931).
- 28 Idem, "Sredi somnenij i očevidnostej", *Utverždenija*, 3 (1932), 105.
- 29 Idem, "Čelovek i ego znakomye", *Čisla*, 9 (1933), 137.
- 30 Idem, "O mističeskoj atmosfere molodoj literatury v èmigracii", op. cit., 308.
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PART THREE

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- 1 For an account of the ancestry of the Štejger (Steiger) family see: M. Dal'ton, "'Vive ut vivas': O švejcarskich i russkich Štejgerach", *Novyj žurnal*, 156 (1984), 286-290.
- 2 Ibid., 290.
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- 4 Separate volumes of Štejger's are: *Ètot den'* (Paris, 1928); *Èta žizn'* (Paris, 1932); *Neblagodarnost'* (Paris, 1936); and *Dvaždy dva četyre* (Paris, 1950; reprint, New York, 1981).
- 5 Zinaida Šachovskaja, *Otraženija* (Paris, 1975), 62-66, 86-105. 6 Kirill Vil'čkovskij, "Perepiska M. Cvetaevoj s A. Štejgerom", *Opyty*, 5 (1955), 40-67; 7 (1955), 8-18; 8 (1955), 21-25.
- 7 A type-written copy of Kathemerine (written as KAΘHMERINH) is in the possession of Professor Robin Kemball of Lausanne, to whom it was given by Dr Elizabeth Mahler of Basle University. Dr Mahler had been a friend of Štejger (as well as Marina Cvetaeva) and this copy bears an inscription to her by Štejger, dated: "Bazel", 4 maja 1941 prokljatogo goda".
- 8 A cutting of this was shown to me by Baron Serge von Steiger.
- 9 The only exception to this is a review of a volume of poetry by Jurij Ivask, A. Štejger, "Jurij Ivask, *Severnyj bereg*", *Krug*, 3 (1938), 182-185.
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- 19 H.W. Tjalsma, "Acmeism, Adamovič, the Parisian Note and Anatoly Steiger", op. cit., 94-95.
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- 21 Ibid., 23.
- 22 Ibid., 17-19.
- 23 Vil'čkovskij, "Perepiska M. Cvetaevoj s A. Štejgerom", *Opyty*, 8 (1955), 21-25.
- 24 *Kathemarine*, 36-37.
- 25 G. Adamovič, "A. Štejger, *Ètot den*" (review), *Sovr. zapiski*, 33 (1929) 521-527.
- 26 B. Sosinskij, "A. Štejger, *Èta žizn*" (review), *Volja Rossii*, 10-12 (1931), 799.
- 27 M. Cetlin, "A. Štejger, *Neblagodarnost*" (review), *Sovr. zapiski*, 62 (1936), 439.
- 28 L. Červinskaja, "A. Štejger, *Neblagodarnost*" (review), *Krug*, 1 (1936), 180-182.
- 29 Ibid., 180.
- 30 Ibid., 181.
- 31 Z. Šachovskaja, *Otraženija*, op. cit., 88-89.
- 32 Ibid., 90.
- 33 Ibid., 93.
- 34 Ibid., 93.
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- 36 Ibid., 97.
- 37 Ibid., 98.
- 38 Ibid., 91.
- 39 Ibid., 102.
- 40 Ibid., 96.
- 41 Ibid., 101-102.
- 42 E. Baratynskij, "Tavrida A. Murav'eva" (review), *Polnoe sobranie sočinenij* (St. Petersburg, 1914-1915), vol. II, 212.

APPENDIX I

Description of Journals and Newspapers Consulted: 1920-1940

Возрождение: Орган русской национальной мысли, Париж, 1925-1940

Воля России: Ежемесячный журнал политики и культуры, под ред. В. Лебедева, М. Слонима, Е. Сталинского, В. Сухомлина, Прага, 1922-1932

Встречи: Ежемесячный литературный журнал, под ред. Г. Адамовича и М. Кантора, Париж, 1934 № 1-6

Дни: Ежедневная газета, под ред. А. Керенского, Берлин-Париж, 1922-1933

Журнал содружества: Литературно-общественный ежемесячник, издающийся в Выборге обществом Содружество бывших учащихся В.Р.Р.Л., ред. Ф. Уперов, Выборг, 1933-1938

Звено: Ежемесячный литературный журнал, основанным М. Винавером и П. Милуковым, Париж, 1923-1928

Круг: Альманах, № 1, Берлин 1936; № 2, Париж 1937; № 3, Париж 1938; ред. Г. Федотов

Новая газета: Двухнедельник литературы и искусства, ред. М. Слоним, Париж, 1931 № 1-5

Новый дом: Литературный журнал, ред. Д. Кнут, Ю. Терапиано, В. Фогт, Париж, 1926-1927 № 1-3

Новый корабль: Литературный журнал, под ред. В. Злобина, Ю. Терапиано, Л. Энгельгардта, Париж, 1927-1928 № 1-4

Последние новости: Ежедневная газета, под ред. М. Гольдштейна, П. Милукова, Париж, 1920-1940

Русские записки: Общественно-политический и литературный журнал, Париж-Шанхай, 1937-1939 № 1-21

Сборник стихов: Союз молодых поэтов и писателей, Париж, 1929-1931 № 1-5

Современные записки: Ежемесячный литературный и общественно-политический журнал, ред. коллегия А. Аксвентьев, И. Бунаков, А. Гуковский и В. Руднев, Париж, 1920-1940 № 1-70

Утверждения: Орган объединения пореволюционных течений, Париж, 1931-1932 № 1-3

Числа: Сборники под ред. И. де Манциарли и Н. Оцуа, Париж, 1930-1934 № 1-10

APPENDIX II

The following is an unpublished poem by Anatolij Štejger from his collection *Kathemerine* (see p. 142) and is reproduced here by the permission of Professor Robin Kemball and Baron Serge von Steiger. (The companion poem "Hommage to England" was published in *Kovčeg: sbornik ruskoj zarubežnoj literatury* (New York, 1942), 184-185.)

Финская война

I

Не султан грозит, не царь немецкий,
А Чухна, их Белый Генерал. —
Эх, родимый! Где ты молодецкой
Русской крови зря не проливал...

И теперь вот, за Полярным Кругом
Тоже зря — чего молчишь — ответь.
Но молчит и косится с испугом
Весь в крови замученный медведь...

II

Снова плач — „Не уходи, болезный“,
Вечный вопль российских деревень.
Снова трубы. Снова лязг железный,
Гармонист в папахе набекрень.

И уже товарные вагоны,
Как гроба — („на 40 человек“)
А в деревне — ночь... и пред иконой
Плачет мать. И так из века в век.

с. 1939-1940

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In the following will be found those works by Adamovič, Gippius, Chodasevič, Poplavskij, Štejger and Jurij Mandel'stam which have been the most relevant to this book.

Abbreviations used: *Sovr. zapiski* = *Sovremennye zapiski*

Pos. nov. = *Poslednie novosti*

Voz. = *Vozroždenie*

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"Literaturnye besedy", *Zveno* (21 March 1927)

"Literaturnye besedy", *Zveno* (3 April 1927)

"Literaturnye besedy", *Zveno* (17 April 1927)

"Literaturnye vpečatlenija", *Sovr. zapiski*, 61 (1936), 205-212

"Ljudi i knigi", *Sovr. zapiski*, 56 (1934), 284-297

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"Načalo", *Sovr. zapiski*, 41 (1930), 500-511

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